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TIVICAY is a prescription HIV medicine that is used with other antiretroviral medicines to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) in adults and children 12 years of age and older and weighing at least 88 pounds. It is not known if TIVICAY is safe and effective in children younger than 12 years or who weigh less than 88 pounds.

In SINGLE, a clinical study with 833 patients who had never taken HIV treatment before:

- **More patients got to undetectable (less than 50 copies of HIV-1 RNA in a milliliter of blood) with TIVICAY 50 mg once daily and abacavir sulfate + lamivudine than with Atripla[®].** In the study, 88% of patients who took TIVICAY with abacavir sulfate + lamivudine were undetectable vs 81% of patients taking Atripla at 48 weeks.

Patients who took TIVICAY with abacavir sulfate + lamivudine had an average CD4 cell count (CD4 cells are T-cells that help fight infections) increase of 267 cells/mm³ (the number of CD4 cells per cubic millimeter of blood) vs 208 cells/mm³ in patients who took Atripla at 48 weeks.

- **Fewer patients stopped taking TIVICAY due to side effects.** In the study, 2% of patients taking TIVICAY with abacavir sulfate + lamivudine stopped taking medication due to side effects vs 10% of patients taking Atripla. The most common mild side effect for patients on TIVICAY was trouble sleeping—affecting 7% of patients on TIVICAY and 3% of patients on Atripla. The most common medium to severe side effects for patients on TIVICAY were trouble sleeping—affecting 3% of patients on TIVICAY and 2% of patients on Atripla; and headache—affecting 2% of patients on TIVICAY and 2% of patients on Atripla.

In SPRING-2, a clinical study with 822* patients who had never taken HIV treatment before:

- **It was shown that TIVICAY[†] worked as well as raltegravir[†] in getting patients to undetectable (less than 50 copies of HIV-1 RNA in a milliliter of blood).** 88% of patients who took TIVICAY[†] were undetectable vs 86% of patients taking raltegravir[†] at 48 weeks.

About half of the patients who took TIVICAY[†] or raltegravir[†] had a CD4 cell count increase of at least 230 cells/mm³ (the number of CD4 cells per cubic millimeter of blood) at 48 weeks. The other half had increases of 230 cells/mm³ or less.

- **Few patients stopped taking medication due to side effects.** 2% of patients taking TIVICAY[†] stopped taking medication due to side effects vs 2% of patients taking raltegravir[†]. The most common mild side effect for patients on TIVICAY was trouble sleeping—affecting 1% of patients on TIVICAY and less than 1% of patients on raltegravir. The most common medium to severe side effect for patients on TIVICAY was nausea—affecting 1% of patients on TIVICAY and 1% of patients on raltegravir.

*808 patients were included in the study results.

[†]Taken with either abacavir sulfate/lamivudine or emtricitabine/tenofovir.

Your results could vary.

Ask your healthcare provider if TIVICAY is right for you.

What is TIVICAY?

TIVICAY is a prescription HIV medicine that is used with other antiretroviral medicines to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) in adults and children 12 years of age and older and weighing at least 88 pounds. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if TIVICAY is safe and effective in children younger than 12 years or who weigh less than 88 pounds.

TIVICAY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control the HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

IMPORTANT SAFETY INFORMATION

Who should not take TIVICAY?

- **Do not take TIVICAY if you take dofetilide because of a life-threatening interaction.**

What are the most serious side effects of TIVICAY?

- **Allergic reactions. Stop taking TIVICAY and get medical help right away if you have:**
 - **A rash with any of these symptoms:** fever; general ill feeling; extreme tiredness; muscle or joint aches; blisters or sores in your mouth; blisters or peeling of your skin; redness or swelling in your eyes; swelling of your mouth, face, lips or tongue; problems breathing.
 - **Any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:** yellowing of your skin or whites of your eyes; dark or tea-colored urine; pale-colored stools (bowel movements); nausea or vomiting; loss of appetite; pain, aching, or tenderness on your right side below the ribs.

- **Changes in liver tests.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with TIVICAY. Your healthcare provider may do tests to check your liver function before and during treatment with TIVICAY.
- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicines, including increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck (“buffalo hump”), breast, and around the middle of your body. Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these problems are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

What are the other possible side effects of TIVICAY?

- The most common side effects of TIVICAY include trouble sleeping and headache.

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of TIVICAY.

Important Safety Information continued on next page.

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What should I tell my healthcare provider before I take TIVICAY?

Before taking TIVICAY, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to TIVICAY
- have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C
- have any other medical condition
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TIVICAY will harm your unborn baby
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed** if you take TIVICAY. You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby. It is not known if TIVICAY passes into your breast milk. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements you take.

TIVICAY and other medicines may affect each other, causing side effects. TIVICAY may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how TIVICAY works.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- other HIV-1 medicines including: efavirenz (SUSTIVA®), etravirine (INTELENCE®), fosamprenavir (LEXIVA®)/ritonavir (NORVIR®), nevirapine (VIRAMUNE®), or tipranavir (APTIVUS®)/ritonavir (NORVIR®).

- antacids or laxatives that contain aluminum, magnesium, sucralfate (CARAFATE®), or buffered medicines. TIVICAY should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.
- iron or calcium supplements. Supplements including multivitamins containing calcium or iron may be taken at the same time with TIVICAY if taken with food. Otherwise, TIVICAY should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.
- anti-seizure medicines: oxcarbazepine (TRILEPTAL®), phenytoin (DILANTIN®, DILANTIN®-125, PHENYTEK®), phenobarbital (LUMINAL®), carbamazepine (CARBATROL®, EQUETRO®, TEGRETOL®, TEGRETOL®-XR, TERIL®, EPITOL®)
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- a medicine that contains metformin
- rifampin (RIFATER®, RIFAMATE®, RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®)

You are encouraged to report negative side effects of prescription drugs to the FDA. Visit www.fda.gov/medwatch, or call 1-800-FDA-1088.

Please see Patient Information for TIVICAY on the next pages and discuss it with your healthcare provider.

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Healthcare

PATIENT INFORMATION

TIVICAY® (TIV-eh-kay) (dolutegravir) Tablets

Read this Patient Information before you start taking TIVICAY and each time you get a refill. There may be new information. This information does not take the place of talking with your healthcare provider about your medical condition or treatment.

What is TIVICAY?

TIVICAY is a prescription HIV medicine that is used with other antiretroviral medicines to treat Human Immunodeficiency Virus-1 (HIV-1) infections in adults and children 12 years of age and older and weighing at least 88 pounds. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if TIVICAY is safe and effective in children under 12 years of age or who weigh less than 88 pounds.

When used with other HIV-1 medicines to treat HIV-1 infection, TIVICAY may help:

- Reduce the amount of HIV-1 in your blood. This is called “viral load.”
- Increase the number of white blood cells called CD4+ (T) cells in your blood, which help fight off other infections.
- Reduce the amount of HIV-1 and increase the CD4+ (T) cells in your blood which may help improve your immune system. This may reduce your risk of death or getting infections that can happen when your immune system is weak (opportunistic infections).

TIVICAY does not cure HIV-1 infection or AIDS. You must stay on continuous HIV-1 therapy to control HIV-1 infection and decrease HIV-related illnesses.

Avoid doing things that can spread HIV-1 infection to others.

- Do not share or re-use needles or other injection equipment.
- Do not share personal items that can have blood or body fluids on them, like toothbrushes and razor blades.
- Do not have any kind of sex without protection. Always practice safe sex by using a latex or polyurethane condom to lower the chance of sexual contact with any body fluids such as semen, vaginal secretions, or blood.

Ask your healthcare provider if you have any questions about how to prevent passing HIV to other people.

Who should not take TIVICAY?

Do not take TIVICAY if you take dofetilide. Taking TIVICAY and dofetilide can cause side effects that may be life-threatening.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking TIVICAY?

Before you take TIVICAY, tell your healthcare provider if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to TIVICAY
- have or had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection
- have any other medical condition
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. It is not known if TIVICAY will harm your unborn baby. Tell your healthcare provider if you become pregnant while taking TIVICAY.

Pregnancy Registry. There is a pregnancy registry for women who take antiviral medicines during pregnancy. The purpose of the registry is to collect information about the health of you and your baby. Talk to your healthcare provider about how you can take part in this registry.

- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. **Do not breastfeed if you take TIVICAY.**

- You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
- It is not known if TIVICAY passes into your breast milk.
- Talk to your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, or herbal supplements. TIVICAY and other medicines may affect each other causing side effects. TIVICAY may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how TIVICAY works.

Especially tell your healthcare provider if you take:

- other HIV-1 medicines including: efavirenz (SUSTIVA®), etravirine (INTELENCE®), fosamprenavir (LEXIVA®)/ritonavir (NORVIR®), nevirapine (VIRAMUNE®), or tipranavir (APTIVUS®)/ritonavir (NORVIR).
- antacids or laxatives that contain aluminum, magnesium, sucralfate (CARAFATE®), or buffered medicines. TIVICAY should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.
- iron or calcium supplements. Supplements including multivitamins containing calcium or iron may be taken at the same time with TIVICAY if taken with food. Otherwise, TIVICAY should be taken at least 2 hours before or 6 hours after you take these medicines.
- anti-seizure medicines:
 - oxcarbazepine (TRILEPTAL®)
 - phenytoin (DILANTIN®, DILANTIN®-125, PHENYTEK®)
 - phenobarbital (LUMINAL®)
 - carbamazepine (CARBATROL®, EQUETRO®, TEGRETOL®, TEGRETOL®-XR, TERIL®, EPITOL®)
- St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)
- a medicine that contains metformin
- rifampin (RIFATER®, RIFAMATE®, RIMACTANE®, RIFADIN®)

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are not sure if your medicine is one that is listed above.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

How should I take TIVICAY?

- Take TIVICAY exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.
- Do not change your dose or stop taking TIVICAY without talking with your healthcare provider.
- Stay under the care of a healthcare provider while taking TIVICAY.
- You can take TIVICAY with or without food.
- If you miss a dose of TIVICAY, take it as soon as you remember. If it is within 4 hours of your next dose, skip the missed dose and take the next dose at your regular time. Do not take 2 doses at the same time. If you are not sure about your dosing, call your healthcare provider.
- If you take too much TIVICAY, call your healthcare provider or go to the nearest hospital emergency room right away.
- Do not run out of TIVICAY. The virus in your blood may become resistant to other HIV-1 medicines if TIVICAY is stopped for even a short time. When your supply starts to run low, get more from your healthcare provider or pharmacy.

What are the possible side effects of TIVICAY?

TIVICAY may cause serious side effects, including:

- **Allergic reactions.** Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with TIVICAY. **Stop taking TIVICAY and get medical help right away if you:**
 - **develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms**
 - fever
 - generally ill feeling
 - extreme tiredness
 - muscle or joint aches
 - blisters or sores in mouth
 - blisters or peeling of the skin
 - redness or swelling of the eyes
 - swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue
 - problems breathing
 - **develop any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems:**
 - yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes
 - dark or tea-colored urine
 - pale-colored stools or bowel movements
 - nausea or vomiting
 - loss of appetite
 - pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side below the ribs
- **Changes in liver tests.** People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with TIVICAY. Your healthcare provider may do

(continued)

PATIENT INFORMATION for TIVICAY® (dolutegravir) Tablets (cont'd)

tests to check your liver function before and during treatment with TIVICAY.

- **Changes in body fat** can happen in people who take HIV-1 medicines. These changes may include increased amount of fat in the upper back and neck ("buffalo hump"), breast, and around the middle of your body (trunk). Loss of fat from the legs, arms, and face may also happen. The exact cause and long-term health effects of these problems are not known.
- **Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome)** can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system may get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after starting your HIV-1 medicine.

The most common side effects of TIVICAY include:

- trouble sleeping • headache

Tell your healthcare provider about any side effect that bothers you or that does not go away.

These are not all the possible side effects of TIVICAY. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects. You may report side effects to FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

How should I store TIVICAY?

- Store TIVICAY at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C).

Keep TIVICAY and all medicines out of the reach of children.

General information about TIVICAY

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use TIVICAY for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give TIVICAY to other people, even if they have the same symptoms you have. It may harm them.

You can ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider for information about TIVICAY that is written for health professionals.

For more information call 1-877-844-8872 or go to www.TIVICAY.com.

What are the ingredients in TIVICAY?

Active ingredient: dolutegravir sodium

Inactive ingredients: d-mannitol, microcrystalline cellulose, povidone K29/32, sodium starch glycolate, and sodium stearyl fumarate. The tablet film-coating contains the inactive ingredients iron oxide yellow, macrogol/PEG, polyvinyl alcohol-part hydrolyzed, talc, and titanium dioxide.

This Patient Information has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Manufactured for:

by:



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Research Triangle Park, NC 27709
May 2014
TVC:2PIL



GlaxoSmithKline

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Soar over new and different places in a hot air balloon as part of your next getaway (pictured here: the view from one of Bob's Balloons in Orlando, Florida: www.bobsballoons.com). Photo by Andy Lien



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CONTRIBUTORS



E.B. BOATNER



PAT EVANS



KATHLEEN
WATSON



ELLEN KRUG



JUSTIN JONES



STEVE LENIUS



JOHN TOWNSEND



RANDY STERN



JENNIFER
PARELLO



SHANE LUECK



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Editorial

Managing Editor Andy Lien 612-436-4671

Editorial Assistants Linda Raines 612-436-4694,
Shane Lueck 612-436-4692

Editor Emeritus Ethan Boatner 612-436-4670

Editorial Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672

Copy Editor Bridget Rocheford-Kearney

Contributors Pat Evans, Nell Gelhaus, Ed Huyck, Justin Jones,
Brandon McCray, Ellen Krug, Steve Lenius, Jennifer Parello,
John Townsend, Carla Waldemar, Randy Stern, Shane Lueck,
Kathleen Watson

Advertising

Sales & Advertising Director Barry Leavitt 612-436-4690

Senior Account Executive Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

Account Executives Robert Felton 612-436-4697, Richard
Kranz 612-436-4675, Anton Reichl 612-436-4695

Advertising Associate George Holdgrafer 612-436-4672

Sales & Advertising Traffic Coordinator

Linda Raines 612-436-4694

Sales Appointments Michelle Ulmer 612-436-4693

Classifieds Suzanne Farrell 612-436-4699

National Sales Representative Rivendell Media
212-242-6863

Creative

Creative Director Hubert Bonnet 612-436-4678

Graphic Designer Mike Hnida 612-436-4679

Photographer Sophia Hantzes

Lavender Studios Hubert Bonnet, Mike Hnida,
Austin Lindstrom

Administration

Publisher Lavender Media, Inc.

President & CEO Stephen Rocheford 612-436-4665

Vice President & CC Pierre Tardif 612-436-4666

Chief Financial Officer Rick Olson 612-436-4664

Administrative Assistant Austin Lindstrom 612-436-4661

Founders George Holdgrafer, Stephen Rocheford

Inspiration Steven W. Anderson (1954-1994), Timothy J. Lee
(1968-2002), Russell Berg (1957-2005), Kathryn Rocheford
(1914-2006), Jonathan Halverson (1974-2010), Adam
Houghtaling (1984-2012), Walker Pearce (1946-2013)

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3715 Chicago Avenue S., Minneapolis, MN 55407

LavenderYellowPages.com

612-436-4660 **Office**

877-515-9969 **Toll Free**

612-436-4685 **Fax**

612-436-4664 **Subscriptions**

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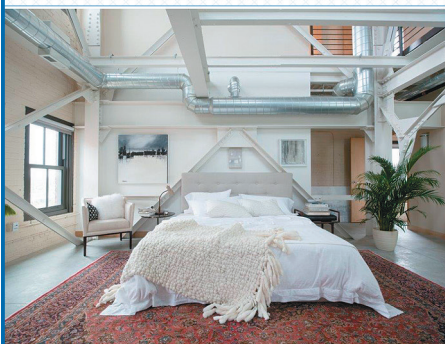
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Do It Yourself Families

I'm sure you'll recognize the people in the Children & Family Quarterly later in this issue; it's the family that was on our Lavender 500 Pride in Pictures Issue. It was one of those serendipitous situations that comes along every once in a while that makes an editor just as pleased as punch. The Pride in Pictures Issue was on the stands for about a day and was getting great reviews. Then, an email message showed up in my inbox with the subject line: **Lavender's 500th Issue - Cover Family!** It was from Tony McClay and, in it, he informed me that he and Dan Porter were thrilled to be on the cover, their son Leon was just adopted last year, and they were going to be married the following weekend. What a thrilling message to get; one of those that makes me grin from ear to ear.

Then, I got a follow-up email from Dan announcing that they'd just been selected for the School Safety Technical Assistance Council to develop and monitor the guidelines for the legislation that had passed for Safe Schools in Minnesota last session. Rapidly, my mind connected all the dots for this current issue that includes the Children & Family Quarterly with a focus on going Back to School:

New Family → Adoption → School Age Son → Marriage → Safe Schools = Happy Editor

So, we give you the unforeseen follow-up to our Pride in Pictures Cover. We want you to meet the Porters. All three of them. Their story is absolutely delightful.

Interestingly, even before this story had developed, I was planning on talking about another family I encountered while traveling for this Fall Getaways Issue. Now the segue is even stronger. Just after our Pride Issue (497) went to press, I ended up hopping on a plane for Las Vegas. Every once in a while I get invited to attend media trips to different locations. They're valuable as not just a way for me to get out and explore, but also to become familiar with rainbow communities elsewhere. On this trip, we visited the The Gay and Lesbian Community Center of Southern Nevada and discovered a superb, succeeding place where the GLBTQ community can find safe harbor, and can also have access to resources and interact with the community around them in a constructive, enterprising way. It has a library, classrooms, a cafe, and spaces that are rented out as an additional revenue stream. I soaked it all up.

On top of the travel, I'm usually with other journalists and editors from other publications that represent various segments of the GLBTQIA community and the trips become mini-retreats; a little like "Continuing Ed. at Large." I don't have a counterpart here in Minneapolis/St. Paul; so the professional development and idea-sharing I gain while traveling with people who do my job for the same community but in different markets is worth my weight in gold. Our Vegas trip was no exception. I spent four days with professionals from Canada, California, Mexico, and the UK...and I bled them for their knowledge and thoughts. Whereas I'm only a few years into this job, some were a few decades into theirs...or masters of other professions, such as acting.

We found out rather quickly that the journalists sent from the UK were not only partners, but also fairly famous. Cameron Laux is a writer with a novel coming out shortly. His partner, Charlie Condou, is an actor who'd most recently ended a multi-year run on *Coronation Street*, a television show that's aired approximately 2.5 hours a week in Britain. So, he was easy to identify for those from across the pond who were vacationing in Las Vegas and we got stopped for photos every once in a while. It was fascinating to get to know them and learn about their life together. And, as travel companions, they were wonderful. Engaging and charming, funny and canny. Charlie was

recently honored as one of GLAAD's Global Voices at the 25th Annual Media Awards in April in Los Angeles and he's recognized as one of the most influential gay men in the UK. He's both an advocate for gay causes in general as well as for gay parenting. Believe it or not, this is where it really gets interesting (as if they weren't interesting enough already).

Years ago, Charlie's friend, Catherine Kanter, asked Charlie if he would have kids with her if she hadn't found "Mr. Right" by age 40. He said yes. He'd always wanted to be a dad. Time passed, she turned 40, and she came back around to the subject. By that time, Charlie was with Cameron and it went from being his decision to being their decision. They decided yes and, years later, the three of them have two children, Georgia a few years older than Hal. While the guys were traveling with us in the United States, the kids were just with their mom as a normal part of their co-parenting schedule. (And their dads really missed them.) Cameron is just as close to them as Charlie is, without being biologically connected, and is their primary caregiver whenever Charlie is shooting on location and the kids aren't with Catherine. It's been a wonderful experience; Charlie used to write a column about their family and you can find it online if you search for their names.

I'm sure it has its snags every once in a while, but it sounded like a dreamy arrangement that works well for everyone, considering that sometimes our Mr. and Ms. Rights don't always come along during our child-bearing years. Might Cameron and Charlie marry? They think so. Now that same-sex marriage is legal in Britain, it's a likelihood. But, love makes them a family. Period. Just like the Porters' t-shirts said on the cover of the Pride in Pictures Issue.

The beauty of these stories is in showing how many different ways a family can be composed. I'm using the term "how" in two ways...one as in what it's composed of, the other as in how it's assembled as a composition. In the case of the Porters, the family is composed of two fathers and a son. How they assembled their family was by looking into the foster system, finding an older child, and adopting Leon. They could've stopped there, but they took "family" a step further and added marriage to the mix, involving the trio in the entire process. As for Charlie, Cameron, Catherine, Georgia, and Hal, there are two dads and a mom; how it happened was through in-vitro fertilization (IVF) with the mother carrying both children to term. Other families we've featured in these Children & Family Quarterlies have shown two mothers using artificial insemination with one carrying both children to term, two fathers having a baby with a surrogate mother via IVF, and two mothers using artificial insemination, one carrying the first baby, the other to carry a future baby. All versions of "how" are of interest to this community so that we can see what the families look like and how they got there. All are valid; all are just the beginning of how what the future will look like for households with same-sex parents. Do It Yourself Families, some assembly required.

I look forward to traveling more, learning more, meeting more, and telling you more.



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OUR LAVENDER

A WORD IN EDGEWISE | BY E.B. BOATNER

Driving Out or Welcoming In, We Make The Choice

We live in a country where homelessness is penalized, even criminalized. Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, for example, is about to pass a law forbidding homeless persons to store possessions publicly.

Ft. Lauderdale police would be required to give a homeless person a 24-hour warning before confiscating his or her possessions, it's obvious that if you don't have a home today, you're not likely to have one tomorrow. Confiscated belongings then would be ransomed for "return" fees or destroyed. Having no place to store the reclaimed items, the cycle would repeat without any effort to find a solution for the core problem: housing for the homeless.

Other cities have other methods to drive away the unsightly homeless, such as seeding any open public surface with concrete spikes to prevent transients—or any other citizen—from alighting to rest. Diametrically opposed to the "NIMBY" philosophy is that of Auburn University's Rural Studio, that, for the past two decades, has been working to design affordable, sustainable dwellings.

It would profit urban planners to study the recently published *Rural Studio at Twenty: Designing and Building in Hale County, Alabama*. In text and extensive illustrations, the five authors describe

their techniques for designing and building these innovative dwellings, methods used to select recipients, and the crucial interactions between the designers and builders and the homes' residents.

While the project does not provide homes on a large scale, and the rural nature of Hale County offers cheaper land than urban Birmingham, Minneapolis, or Ft. Lauderdale, it is Rural Studio's concern for the well-being and dignity of the less fortunate that needs to be taken into account.

One cannot in an instant throw up free single housing for everyone in need, not even in Hale County, but Auburn University's Rural Studio, its students, planners, and clients, offer a fresh lens through which to view our thinking about decent housing for all.

In his ballad "Falling Leaves," country singer Grandpa Jones cautioned, "When you leave this earth for a better home someday / The only thing you'll take is what you gave away." Just as intelligent, planned giving benefits the giver and receiver, so confiscating a homeless man's possessions or sweeping out the poor for "aesthetic" reasons damages both the sweeper and the swept. ■

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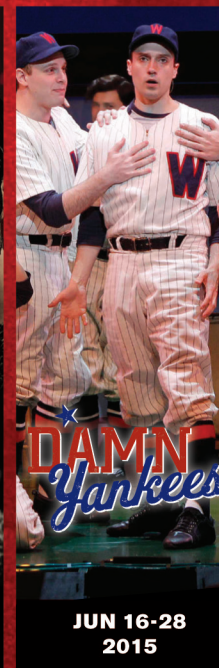
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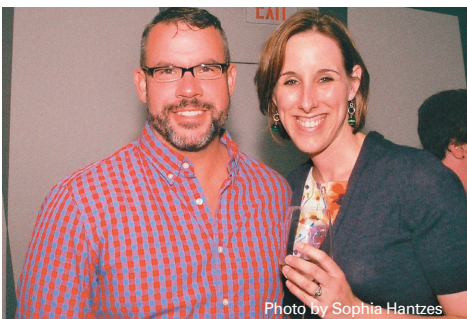
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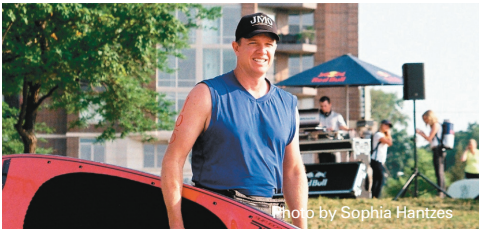
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OUR LAVENDER

"BEAR" WITH ME (WHILE I TELL YOU ABOUT)... | BY BARRY LEAVITT



THE RAINBOW CONNECTION COMEDY TOUR

Saturday, August 30 • 8pm

Camp Bar • 490 Robert St. N., Minneapolis

The Rainbow Connection Comedy Tour is a new, full-spectrum standup comedy tour from the creator of Stand Out: The National Queer Comedy Search. By combining the comedic talents of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans comedians, they'll be showcasing the rainbow of queer comedy. The show will be headlined by Los Angeles-based comedian Casey Ley, hosted by Adam Guerino, and featuring Marla Depew, Dina Nina Martinez, and Rachel McCartney. Visit www.camp-bar.net/cabaret for tickets and more information.

MIX: LABOR DAY WEEKEND

August 31 • 6pm-2am

Union Rooftop • 825 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis

Return to the Union rooftop—rain or shine—to bookend your summer with MIX. This time you're asked to bring non-perishable food items and/or household supplies to help stock the shelves at The Aliveness Project. Resident DJ's Shiek and Lenka Paris will be back behind the decks as always. No cover, 21+. Search "MIX: Labor Day Weekend" on Facebook for more information.

4TH ANNUAL NORTHERN DECADENCE WEEKEND

August 31 – September 1

eagleBOLTbar • 515 Washington Ave. S., Minneapolis

If it's Labor Day Weekend in New Orleans, it's Southern Decadence, but in the Twin Cities, it is definitely Northern Decadence Weekend, and the eagleBOLTbar pulls out all the stops for this wild and crazy weekend as part of their 16th anniversary. Friday, its 2-4-1s from 2-4pm and 3-4-1s from 4-7pm. Saturday is highlighted by Leathers and Feathers Decadence Night from 9pm-2am, and includes a special appearance by Raging Stallion model Aleks Buldocek... WOOF! If you have any pep in you after Saturday night, Sunday will feature brunch and build your own Bloodies from 10am-2pm, Showtunes beginning at 4pm and beer bust 4-8pm. And since Monday is a holiday, you get to do beer bust all over again from 4-8pm. Get your sleep before and after Labor Day Weekend because it's going to be a wild Northern Decadence Weekend. For a complete schedule of events and specials, visit www.eagleboltbar.com.

MANKATO PRIDEFEST

September 5-7

Various locations in Mankato

We're into the homestretch of local GLBT Pride festivals, and it's a beautiful time of year to head to Mankato for the annual Mankato Pridefest. The weekend is highlighted by a few big events. First, it's the Pride Parade on September 6 at 11:30am. The parade route down Riverfront Drive begins at the Blue Earth County Library, marches down Riverfront Drive, and ends at the festival grounds at Riverfront Park, Mankato. Everyone is invited to create a float, march along, or cheer from the sidewalk! After the parade, head over to Pridefest from 12-5pm at Riverfront Park. The event features music, food, exhibitors, artists, kids crafts, inflatable fun activities, and more! Stage line-up features the Key of

Joy, City of the Weak, the David Yellen Band, and lots of your favorite kings and queens. The day winds down with the Pride dance Party from 8pm-12am at the VFW. Get ready to dance your face off at this Pride tradition! Tickets are \$5 in advance, and can be purchased at the Coffee Hag. \$7 at the door. 18+ to enter, 21+ to drink. Tickets are on sale through September 5. All events are rain or shine! Unfortunately, Mankato does not allow pets at Mankato parks, including Riverfront Park. Visit www.scmnpide.org for a full list of events and information.

THE BRUNCH BRIGADE

September 7 • 10am

The Freehouse • 701 Washington Ave. N., Minneapolis

Join Lavender Magazine and the Minneapolis Movie Bears as we explore the Twin Cities brunch scene, and enjoy a delicious meal while having great conversation with a great group of men and women. Everyone is welcome, and The Freehouse's full brunch and drink menu will be available for purchase. Seating is limited so reserve your seat by logging on to www.minneapolismoviebears.com and pay \$5 per person. When you show up at the event, you get your \$5 back to put toward your bill. ■



The Book of Mormon Second National Tour. Photo by Joan Marcus, 2014

THE BOOK OF MORMON

Through Sept. 14
Orpheum Theatre, 910 Hennepin Av., Mpls.
(800) 982-2787
www.HennepinTheatreTrust.org

This musical religious satire has put mainstream television values on track on The Great White Way with Herculean force. Nine Tony Awards and continual sold-out Broadway and touring success has made *The Book of Mormon* a phenomenon. Robert Lopez, who composed the music for the Tony-winning *Avenue Q*, a liberal Democratic adult spoof on *Sesame Street*, is the man who got the ball rolling for the current TV-mentality-on-Broadway phase. It was even embraced by the so-called Dean of American Theater Critics, Ben Brantley. And what he says, as they say, goes.

South Park creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone wrote the book and lyrics, therefore, you guessed right: it's packed with wicked snark, and actually uses that in a way reminiscent of a stand-up comic on a roll. The basic setup is ripe for that.

Two young Mormon missionaries—one is All-American handsome, the other overweight and insecure—are plopped into a Ugandan village where no one is able to grasp the theological views of the two young white men. It's also notable that the wave of homophobic hysteria that has swept Uganda since before it opened on Broadway is not referenced.

If you find that you want to get a fuller picture of Uganda after you've seen the show, see the DVD of *Call Me Kuchu*. If you want more insight into Mormonism and gayness, see the DVDs *Latter Days* and *The Falls*. They are a stark contrast to this very successful stage musical.

IF WE WERE BIRDS

Sept. 12 - 27
Nimbus Theatre
1517 Central Av. NE, Mpls.
(612) 227-1188
www.tctwentypercent.org

20% Theatre Company Twin Cities has really been stepping up their game this year. They gave us a jolting production on competing views of feminism with *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn* and now they are digging into issues of war, Greco-Roman myth, classical tragedy, and women as chattel with *If We Were Birds* by Erin Shields. It's rather thrilling to see a theater group sink its teeth into such challenging material.

The story takes characters from ancient myth and weaves in the experiences of women in modern and contemporary conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Nanking, and Berlin. Shields draws inspiration from gay Roman poet Ovid's *Metamorphoses* with its story of Tereus (Ethan Bjelland) who kidnaps and abuses his sister-in-law, Philomela (Suzi Gard). Her sister, Procne (Jill Iversen) also figures quite dramatically into the action. The play also has a Greek Chorus played by 20%'s Dana Lee Thompson, Siddeeqah Shabazz, Tara Lucchino, Cynthia Hornbeck, Laura Mason, and Katherine Engel.

Director Lee Conrads shares that when she first read *If We Were Birds*, "It felt like the answer to artistic questions I had been pondering a long time. I have an almost evangelical love of Greek Theater and Shields does an excellent job of taking the very elements that often stymie classical theater productions' accessibility to modern audiences—the chorus, the heightened language, the extended oratories—and making them the most engaging aspects of the play."

"I have also spent a considerable amount of time thinking about the intersection between art (theater specifically) and social justice. I believe that theater can be a powerful tool for good in the world when we tell stories that deepen our understanding of injustice and force us to sit with difficult problems without offering much in the way of comfort or solutions."

"I'm also often overwhelmed by the injustice of the world (and my relative powerlessness) and find it tempting to use theater to just shout into the void and release that tension. And I am continually impressed by the ways in which Shields navigates that line. The heightened language, the opportunities to incorporate movement, and the epic/mythic elements from Ovid are incredibly cathartic. But Shields never lets us—as artists as well as audience members—use them as a crutch to face the harsh realities of her play. By interweaving Ovid's myth with the stories of real women who have endured unimaginable terror as a by-product of war, she forces us to face the fact that the redemption that comes to Philomela is rare outside fiction. We don't have gods to sew our tongues back in and the restitution we ache for is something we must build for each other as a global community."



If We Were Birds. Photo courtesy of 20% Theatre Company Twin Cities

SEXY LAUNDRY

Sept. 5 - 28

Park Square Theatre, 20 W. 7th St., St. Paul
(651) 291-7005

www.parksquaretheatre.org

Michele Riml's comedy catches the wave of middle-age couples living longer, therefore needing to deal with sexual interaction or lack of it, as time goes forward. However, in the case of Alice and Henry, longstanding resentments, defense mechanisms, and assumptions get in the way of the vulnerability necessary for renewed sexual happiness.

The actors at Park Square have been examining that as they have geared up for the area premiere. Charity Jones plays Alice and notes, "After 25 years of marriage, raising three children, managing a career and household, Alice feels a lack of emotional and physical intimacy with her husband. A trip to the gym sparks an existential panic that she is on the ineluctable slide to invisibility in a youth-obsessed culture, questioning not only her attractiveness but her very sense of feeling alive. She wants to try something new in the hope of rediscovering what has been lost."

John Middleton relates, "At the beginning of the play Henry isn't interested in 'improving' his marriage because he doesn't think it needs improving. Indeed, with all the other things there are to worry about, he wants and needs their marriage to be something he can count on. Besides, experience has taught him that 'improvements' usually mean something that will cost him money, and/or involve long talks about everything he's doing wrong and needs to change. In short, if it ain't broke, don't spend too much money on a ridiculous hotel room."

Director Mary Finnerty says that many of the artists working on the show have had "visceral reactions to it. One of the designers said she could hear echoes of conversations from her marriage, another said the play touched him and made him cry. I personally felt as though someone had been crawling around my house with a tape recorder, capturing my conversations with my husband. So the dialogue is very real. *Sexy Laundry* departs from your average relationship story as the characters share their fantasies which grow and free them to either travel separate paths or choose to remain together in a more vital relationship. Anyone in a long term relationship will identify with these characters and their struggle to re-invigorate their relationship."

THE WOLF OF WALMART

Through Nov. 1

Brave New Workshop
824 Hennepin Av., Mpls.

www.bravenewworkshop.com

Comic actor Bobby Gardner is in top form as a Walmart official, or maybe I should say a "thought policeman," who stands in as the face of a company that, in the spirit of the gospel according to profit, is interested only in dumbing down and distracting its customer base. When public

education collapses, Big Brother Walmart steps in and offers history classes that weave in product placement and factually irrelevant advertising for McDonald's and Sleep Number Beds. The history of the A-Bomb and Martin Luther King, Jr. have nothing to do with these things of course, but it's the condition on which the corporation will be "benevolent." Kids are conditioned into consumerism.

The region's premiere comedy troupe is in new, edgier territory and, though *The Wolf of Walmart* is not as boisterous as a lot of other Brave New Workshop's revues, it has its own compelling comic energy. It's as laugh-out-loud as many of their revues are, but there's a more serious, more penetrating attitude. Matt Erkel is perfectly creepy as a seasoned Walmart greeter, reminiscent of a cult follower. Taj Ruler and Lauren Anderson create a wild contrast as two women of different generations with very different views of feminism. Tom Reed excels throughout. Peter Guertin's music draws nicely from different genres, adding ironic touches. The driving force behind this brave new set of vignettes are Caleb and Katy McEwen who have astutely co-directed the piece with a kind of wonderfully low key Orwellian ferocity. They're clearly showing us the problem of a corporation having the status of a person, a citizen. ■



The Wolf of Walmart. Photo by Dani Werner

Red Cow



(From left): Luke Shimp and Pat Evans.

EXPANDING THE HERD TO ST. PAUL

A familiar name has crossed the river into St Paul; restaurateur Luke Shimp has opened a second Red Cow a little more than a year after scoring a big hit with his first location in Edina. His newest offering is on Selby Avenue in the tony Cathedral Hill neighborhood of the saintly city.

"It's a 21st century tavern with gourmet fare," Shimp enthusiastically offered up. "We have craft beers on tap, often rotating with six new beers a week. There is a nice selection of fine wines and we have craft cocktails with what I think is a Red Cow twist. They stay true to the origins of the drinks but with that little mixologist twist."

Giving people what they want is not a new skill for Shimp. He was one of the founders of the Blue Plate Restaurant Company which operates several successful restaurants around the Twin Cities. All this got me to wondering, why keep the same name for his second restaurant?

"You know in my past life, we had different names for all of our restaurants and we were very successful with that, but I wanted to build

more of a brand. Also, from a more selfish standpoint, it's easier to manage with just one name and brand," he explained.

Shimp is planning to add to his herd, he's signed a lease for another Red Cow location in Minneapolis North Loop neighborhood to open early next year. And that's not all that's coming down the trough.

"Ultimately, the end goal is to have more restaurants but I don't want to saturate the Twin Cities market. I don't want to become this big behemoth chain. I'd like to see maybe seven to ten Red Cows in multiple states, maybe Colorado and Washington. I'm kind of an urban guy who really loves the city and neighborhoods." The latter are markets Shimp says have an almost identical psychographic makeup as the Twin Cities. Translation: they are a lot like us and we like the same stuff.

"There are a lot of people doing burgers, craft beer, and cocktails, but there's really no one putting it all together in one package. And I felt now is the time to do that."

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ➔

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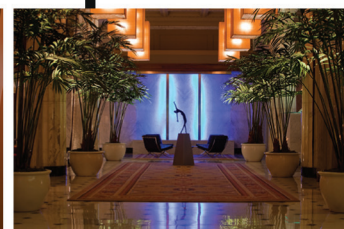
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TASTE BUDS WITH PAT EVANS

He's probably right about that. On the afternoon we visited the new Red Cow to graze on some menu items, the place was packed. Clearly, word of mouth is paying off. Or maybe it's the deliciously satisfying food that is being delivered to those eager mouths.

"Who doesn't love caramel corn and who doesn't love bacon?" Shimp exclaimed. "One night, I was sitting at home making caramel corn for my sons and there's some bacon in the fridge and I thought, 'Maybe I'll try a little of that.' It turned out to be a perfect bar snack." And it has become a menu favorite.

Even though Shimp can cook, he credits his team of chefs as the ones who really deliver the goods. One of their most popular items is the poutine.

A traditional poutine is a Canadian dish of French fries, cheese curds, and beef gravy over the top. One of the two Red Cow twists on poutine tops the fries with apples, bacon, and blue cheese. And trust me, it is incredibly good (and gluten-free). Alert: wear a larger belt with more holes so you can expand it for this one.

A few of the St. Paul-specific features include the Roasted Peach & Burrata starter, the French Onion Burger, and the Irish Coffee Float.

The Roasted Peach & Burrata starter delights the tongue with oven-roasted peaches, fresh burrata, hibiscus salt, and a balsamic reduction, covered with raw sugar and torched as a brûlée. Impressively simple and so very summery.

Born from the Twin Cities burger battle, this new addition to the "cows" extensive burger lineup is impressive. It features a local grass-fed beef patty piled with Tillamook white cheddar cheese, caramelized onions, and Yukon Gold potato chips with chive sour cream "dip," all on a Baker's Wife bun.

Finish your meal with an Irish Coffee Float and a Skillet Chocolate Chip Cookie Sundae. They're cool tastes of old flavors.

The menu also boasts many gluten-free items, just look for the GF designation. Shimp says he and his team plan to continue to innovate, but one recipe will stay the same:

"A lot of times people ask for the secret sauce and one of the things I learned from my past life success with Blue Plate is living the mantra: we are one with the community. It's more than a geographical location. We want to be a place where people come and gather and that's really the true definition of a tavern." ■

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Duluth-Superior Pride Offers Awesome Labor Day Weekend Cornucopia

By George Holdgrafer

Photo by Sophia Hantzes

This year, Duluth-Superior Pride marks its 28th anniversary with a five-day cornucopia of events in the Twin Ports of Duluth, Minnesota, and Superior, Wisconsin, over Labor Day Weekend, August 27-31. The theme is "Out Is In."

Featured entertainment at the free Pride Festival on August 30 in Duluth includes headliners Ariana & The Rose (3:30 PM), Branden James (4:00 PM), Svet (4:45 PM), Cheesa (5:30 PM), and Steve Grand (6:15 PM).

Following the festival, both Superior GLBT bars, The Flame Nightclub and The Main Club, just a few blocks apart, cohost Pride Block Parties at their respective venues.

The Pride Parade on August 31 in Superior returns to its traditional route on Tower Avenue after last year's relocation because of construction. NOTE: The Duluth-Superior Pride Guide incorrectly has the Pride Parade route as Broadway and Banks, Superior.

Looking for a reasonable and fun place to stay on Friday and Saturday, August 29 and 30? Try the venerable Duluth Sauna in Downtown Duluth, with special overnight Pride hours from Noon each day to 9 AM the next day.

For more information, visit www.dspride.com. ■

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Wednesday, August 27

FAGBUG NATION

7 PM

Zinema

222 E. Superior St., Duluth

Thursday, August 28

MAYOR'S RECEPTION & WEEKEND OPENING

5 PM

The Depot

506 W. Michigan St., Duluth

Friday, August 29

POETRY READING

6 PM

Jitters Coffee House

102 W. Superior St., Duluth

Saturday, August 30

HUMMINGBIRD FAMILY 5K RUN/WALK

Registration 8:30 AM

Starts 9 AM

Western Lake Superior Waterfront Trail

7408 Grand Ave., Duluth

PRIDE FESTIVAL (FREE)

11 AM-7 PM

Bayfront Festival Park, Duluth

PRIDE BLOCK PARTIES

8 PM-Midnight

Co-Hosted By The Flame Nightclub

1612 Tower Ave., Superior

The Main Club

1217 Tower Ave., Superior

Sunday, August 31

WORSHIP SERVICE & BREAKFAST

Breakfast 9:30 AM

Pride Services 8:30 AM & 10:30 AM

Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Duluth

835 W. College St., Duluth

PRIDE PARADE

Noon

Tower Ave., Superior

FRUIT FLOAT BOAT CRUISE

3:30 PM

Vista Fleet

323 Harbor Dr., Duluth

FOO FOO CHOO CHOO

Pre-Boarding Party 2 PM

Boarding 3:30 PM

The Depot

506 W. Michigan Ave., Duluth

ANNUAL PRIDE DRAG SHOW FUNDRAISER

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Saturday grab a seat on Riverfront Drive for the **Pride Parade** at 11:30.

Next, check out **Pride Festival** from 12-5, at the stunning Vetter Stone Ampitheater. We've planned a great stage lineup, exhibitors, food and liquor sales, kids crafts and bouncehouses, and so much more!

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Gay Columbus

By Andy Lien

I was sitting at the intersection of High and Gay in Columbus when I marveled at how I never knew about this gay-friendly gem of a town in Ohio. With a population greater than the Twin Cities, I didn't know what to expect: comparable people, buildings, neighborhoods, and politics? Yes and no. While being the home of many corporate headquarters (such as Nationwide Insurance, Victoria's Secret, Abercrombie & Fitch) and one of the largest universities in the United States (The Ohio State University), the city itself seems shorter and broader than our Twin Cities. While its downtown seems less like Minneapolis and more like St. Paul, its historic neighborhoods seem more established and its arts district seems more concentrated than those of our own twin towns. Here is a list of some of the highlights of Columbus.

SHORT NORTH ARTS DISTRICT

Named after an area of town designated by the police as being just short of the University campus in the northern edge of Columbus proper, the **Short North** is one of the grand destinations of Columbus. Not only is there a **Gallery Hop** on the first Saturday of every month when all the art spaces open to the public with music and food to enjoy and consume, but there are restaurants, shops, clubs, and the **Pizzuti Collection** to experience every day as well. The Pizzuti Collection is a non-profit 501c3 exhibition space dedicated to the presentation of contemporary art from the collection of Ron and Ann Pizzuti. Our visit was during the "Cuban Forever" exhibition, the most meaningful of the pieces were clear resin casts of guns and swords, bold mock propaganda posters, and surveillance-ducking smuggler pigeons named after film directors. An impressive collection of permanent art that also made plenty of room for traveling shows, the Pizzuti Collection is a must-see on the Short North list.

I recommend starting one of your weekend days with brunch at **The Pearl**, which is a restaurant, tavern, and oyster room. For small bites to ease you into your morning, have some Old Fashioned Deviled Eggs and Devils on Horseback, but save room for Chicken and Waffles with warm blueberry sauce and Ohio honey...it's lip-smacking and finger-licking good, fortifying you for the day ahead. If you want to spend an afternoon drinking brew or tasting vodka, **North High Brewing** and **Middle West Spirits** will please your palate. You can sample the wares at North High Brewing and also buy supplies for your own home brew. Middle West Spirits shows off beautiful stills and bottles, and the tour ends with a tasting of the distillery's "culinary" spirits offerings. The OYO Vodka is often referred to as the "whisky lover's vodka," which is apparent when you smell and taste what is carefully crafted from local Ohio fields.

The Short North is home to a remarkable number of gay establishments. The arts are in the

air; there's a splash of rainbow—literal or not—everywhere. We spent some time in **Torso**, a store for men, where I admired a number of novelty shirts with text taken from *Steel Magnolias* and my travel companions bought some tank tops, because who doesn't need a new tank top on a trip? **Level Dining Lounge** was not only a place to find tasty drinks and fantastic apps, but our apps of calamari and wings were a hit and my entrée of Pork Cacciatore was stick-to-your-bones hearty. It was all just what we needed before an evening on the town. Make sure you catch **Nina West's Excellent Adventure Drag Show at Axis** while you're in town. Nina's a famous drag queen with a Choose Your Own Adventure Show that breaks the mold for drag shows; she's got a talented ensemble and catchy show to (patent leather) boot. We ended each night at **Union Cafe** where there were plenty of seats on the patio, roaming drag queens, and strong drinks. Even though we weren't at the intersection of two, there was plenty of Gay on this section of High Street.



Opposite: Pieces of "Cuban Forever" exhibit at the Pizzuti Collection.
Clockwise from Left: Community meal preparation and dining at The Kitchen; the best macarons I've found at Pistacia Vera; Fred & Howard watch over their Hausfrau Haven in German Village; and Steel Magnolias gets its spotlight at Torso. Photos by Andy Lien

GERMAN VILLAGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

German Village is a 233-acre neighborhood in Columbus that is on the National Register of Historic Places for its sturdy, red-brick homes with wrought iron fences along tree-lined, brick-paved streets. Settled in the mid-1800s, the Germans in this neighborhood made up as much as one-third of the population of Columbus. Today, you can take guided tours of the mostly residential area, enjoying the brick (but watching your step...particularly if you tend to be glued to your Instagram app on your phone) and the historic architecture around you.

Hausfrau Haven, opened and owned by life and business partners for over 50 years, Fred Holdridge and Howard Burns (now both deceased), is a celebrated hub of neighborhood activity in the German Village with a market and a Laundromat for tourists and residents alike. Nearby, **The Book Loft of German Village** is one of the nation's largest independent book stores. I recommend grabbing a coffee drink (the chocolate and peanut butter "Buckeye Latte" is a must) at the **Cup o' Joe** next door and getting lost in the 32 rooms of bargain books (okay... grab a map if time is of the essence). When you emerge, you have multiple options for your dining needs, depending on the time of day. A food tour of the Village yielded us Kale Caesar Salad, pizzas of Mushroom, Fennel Sausage, and Spicy Yuma varieties at **Harvest Pizzeria** for lunch; yards of the most fresh and flavorful French macarons I've ever had at **Pistacia Vera** for an afternoon snack; small plates and swoon-worthy sangria at **Barcelona** for happy hour; ending it all with supper at **The Kitchen**.



For an interactive cooking and dining experience, go to the lesbian-owned locale called **The Kitchen**. Renovated from an old video store in German Village, this attractive space is open and airy, with multiple work stations for you to get your hands dirty while having plenty of fun. They'll do the prep, cooking, and clean-up, you and yours get to do the assembly and await your masterpieces, served family-style in the spacious dining area. Our dinner included multiple courses with crab salad, salt-roasted fingerling potatoes, herb stuffed chicken (by yours truly), and peach and blueberry cobbler. With a full bar and mixologist on hand, I recommend keeping the imbibing light until after you handle the knives.

FAVORITES

Nestled in Columbus's Victorian Village, an old gas station has been turned into the most charming breakfast place with Sweet & Spicy Bacon and Pancake Balls to boot. For my best brunch pick, Katalina's **Corner Cafe** loves our rainbow community and the rainbow community loves Katalina's. Though I tried to swim upstream and get everyone to call the Pancake Balls on the menu "ebelskiver" per my heritage, I quickly gave in to the orbs of love and only used my mouth for eating. The varieties of filling for the Pancake Balls include Nutella, fig butter, apple/pumpkin butter, and other surprises for our senses. Other



Nutella-filled Pancake Balls at Katalina's; the most superb Zucchini Pronto at Basi Italia. Photos by Andy Lien

hit menu items included Boylan's Biscuit & Veggie Sausage Gravy, savory soups, and deliciously hearty coffee. Then, to rub in how I lost the battle for "ebelskiver" but won the war, I was sent away with a sassy pink t-shirt that says "PEACE LOVE & PANCAKE BALLS." Amen, Sister Katalina. Amen.

Find local small businesses and merchants in the **North Market**, a market with butchers, bakers, and candy makers; fishmongers, green-grocers, and restaurateurs. The businesses grow, catch, find, make, produce, distribute, cook, create, and invent their wares to sell at the only public market in Ohio. I meandered through and bought coffee at the **Taste of Belgium**, bacon and cheese-flavored popcorn at **Pam's Market Popcorn**, Buckeye ice cream and a few macarons at the market's satellite locations of **Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream** and **Pistacia Vera**. Being that I was traveling, I didn't take advantage of the meats and farm vegetables, but would have gladly brought home a bounty of food for a fresh and local meal. As it was, the gourmet snacks had to do. And they did.

A house, a chef, and a killer menu can be found at the Short North's **Basi Italia**. I never thought I'd see the day when I'd name my favorite dish of a meal to be a salad, let alone one comprised of zucchini, but Basi's julienned Zucchini Pronto tossed in a vinaigrette with almonds and

pecorino cheese was simply superb. We sipped fresh watermelon cocktails and some of the specially-smuggled Middle West Spirits OYO made it around our table. While the inside dining area is in a charming house, we enjoyed dining al fresco on the patio. Second only to the zucchini primo, the Beef Short Rib with sweet corn mash, baby watercress, and espresso BBQ sauce was divine.

OVERALL

Columbus is an easy-to-figure destination. Our hotel, the **Crowne Plaza Columbus**, was centrally located and made for easy walking for some of the shopping and dining. As far as transportation goes, we took taxis, but now there's an even better option for downtown Columbus, which utilizes public transportation. **CBUS**, which is a free bus that circulates downtown Columbus to connect the wonderful neighborhoods from north to south: Victorian Village, Italian Village, Short North, Capitol Square, German Village, Brewery District, Arena District, and back to Victorian Village. Beyond those options—and unlike our own program that just expanded from just Minneapolis to now include St. Paul and has yet to fully catch on—the **Car2Go** car sharing system is flourishing in Columbus. There's a bike sharing program called **CoGo**, which is similar to the Twin Cities' Nice Ride, for those who want to see it all on two wheels.

When we travel, do we want to compare where we go to where we come from? It's unavoidable, to an extent, and I'd like to put out there that Columbus seems quite close to what we have in our own backyard, but with *more* and *different* for us to enjoy. Comfort zones are almost assured as Columbus is just really quite gay, day or night, from German Village to Short North to Victorian Village to the University. As far as additional attractions go, **The Columbus Zoo** is award-winning, the **Franklin Park Conservatory** is stunning, and the **Columbus Museum of Art** is a worthy stop as well.

Columbus. It's not as exotic as it is familiar. Throw in how gay-friendly it is and you've got a home away from home. Great place to visit; would definitely want to stay there.

RESOURCES

Short North Arts District:
www.shorthnorth.org

German Village Business Community:
www.gvbusinesscommunity.com

Experience Columbus:
www.experiencecolumbus.com/lgbt ■



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How to Do Orlando Without Kids or Disney

By Andy Lien

When thinking of how common experiences lend themselves to common desires, travel is no exception. For those of us who don't have kids, respite often comes in childless packages. So, when I got the opportunity to travel to Orlando with some college friends, I got it into my head that I wanted to avoid kids and Disney, two of the most prominent features of that area of Florida. Nothing against kids or Disney, I like them both, but this was a challenge! An adventure! And I was up for it.

HIT THE ADULT-ORIENTED TOURIST TRAPS

I rarely do the commercially tourist stuff, so when I looked at the attractions Orlando has to offer, the ones that are based on more adult themes were where I wanted to aim. I don't know about you, but Florida leads me to envision Horatio Caine from *CSI: Miami*. While I can't go find David Caruso whilst cavorting around Orlando, I can actually be him at **CSI: The Experience**. Suit up as either a vest-wearing detective or a white-coat wearing scientist and deconstruct the crime scenes at this attraction. There are three murders, three different crimes to solve, using multiple different high-tech tools as employed on the television show. While some of the clues and deductions were a little elementary, it was a learning experience and teamwork opportunity for both my friend and me. Beware, we're talking autopsies and trashy back alleys, nothing for kids there.

Do you remember a time before shows about crime scene investigators? When things weren't nearly as graphic as today? We couldn't just turn on the television and see the gruesomely gory or the generally grotesque, we had to find it on our own. Which I did. I usually aimed for **Ripley's Believe**

It Or Not! for my doses of shock and awe. I'm guessing that there's an age group out there for which the body anomalies and abnormalities might not be intriguing or interesting, but I'm definitely still in the walk-around-with-my-mouth-agape camp. The Odditorium in Orlando has your shrunk heads, your pierced people, and over 600 more exhibits and artifacts in 10,000 square feet. Something that particularly struck my fancy was one boot of a set of galoshes for cows. Not everything was grotesque, but everything was fascinating.

TITANIC The Experience is something for the movie fanatic and history buff, both. Guests are given a ticket to board the *Titanic*, each with a different name and identity of someone who was on that ill-fated voyage. We're introduced to our tour guide, a member of the crew in costume, and taken through the unsinkable vessel that met a tragic end so many years ago. Artifacts from the R.M.S. *Titanic* are juxtaposed with specific noteworthy areas of the ship that were relevant to both the luxury experience and the failure of the vessel, such as the Promenade Deck. Of course, what floated my boat was being able to have my photograph taken on the Grand Staircase, where



Opposite: Gatorland's inhabitants sunning. Above: The Heart of the Ocean at *TITANIC* The Experience; Seuss-like garden delights at Bok Tower Gardens. Photos by Andy Lien

Rose descended to Jack, mixing fantasy with reality. Likewise, the gift shop has dishes and other items that border on props, depending on how you view them, but I chose not to split hairs. I wouldn't turn down The Heart of the Ocean necklace, whether procured from a fictional safe in a movie or a gift shop in Florida.

Since all of these attractions are located on International Drive, we were able to scope them out as we drove. One that was particularly eye-catching was **Wonderworks**, since it was upside-down. Within are over 100 interactive exhibits that test things like dexterity, cognition, reflex, wind-resilience, and motion-sickness...it's like a science museum meets an arcade. I dipped my hand in the water that was the same temperature as what the Titanic sank in, my friend tested out the Bed of Nails, and I landed the Space Shuttle Discovery. Additionally, there was a rope course, Lazer-Tag, and a 4D Theater in which we "rode" a haunted mine ride. We followed up our trip to Wonderworks with **The Outta Control Magic Comedy Dinner Show** starring Tony Brent. Voted to be "Orlando's Funniest Dinner Show," you can enjoy all-you-can-consume salad, pizza, beer, and wine with about 125 of your closest friends while being entertained by a mixture of amazing magic, impersonations, and high-energy improvisational comedy. We laughed. We enjoyed the people who shared our table and our food. We were entertained, to say the least in this casual, fun-filled setting.

In an effort to find a more nighttime activity that didn't involve heavy drinking or too much neon, I booked us tickets at **Sleuths Mystery Dinner Shows**. Dinner and a show? Count us in. I won't say that we were the youngest, but, actually, we might have been the youngest. Here's the deal, though, people love showing the ropes to the youngest in the crowd and we were newbies to the whole mystery dinner show concept. At the "head" of our round table, an older gent told us the rules of the game. We'd eat a little, be introduced to the characters, eat a little more, see the drama unfold, eat some more, and have to come up with the "whodunnit" to solve the mystery...all before we finished our dessert. The drinks were bottomless, our shaman guide was resolute, the acting was funny, and my lasagna was delicious. The biggest rule of the night was to TRUST NO ONE. Except our guide. He'd been to so many of the shows before (and won a number of them) that each time he told us a new tale, his proverbial fish got bigger. And we ate it right up.

GET OUTSIDE

Want to get in on some 'gator action? There are two great options for accessing alligators, one closer to the rest of Orlando than the other. **Gatorland** reminds me of Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park. There's a big, cartoony alligator mouth that forms the entrance and everything within has a hint of hokey. There are shows and photo ops for everyone, and plenty of gators for the viewing. There's even the Screamin' Gator Zip Line for those who are taller than 37" and dare to fly above Gatorland on a cable. It can get pretty packed and chaotic, but those facts shouldn't keep you from going; everything is well-organized and there's plenty of gators to go around. Kids are unavoidable, but not central to the attraction.

If you're looking for an adventure that's a bit farther out of town (there isn't much of "civilization" in sight), make the drive out to **Wild Florida Airboats & Wildlife Park**. This was a highlight of my trip as I was bent on getting to ride an airboat like in that aforementioned show I can't stop talking about. Wild Florida was less crowded and a bit more sophisticated; something that I appreciated, having traveled without children. There were spacious areas for different types of wildlife, including a large number of "rescue" gators...the ones that might have been flushed or been discovered to be problem guests in gated communities. I made friends with a touchy parrot and had the ride of my life on an airboat for nearly an hour. I kept thinking of how it was located on such a great lake for swimming (how Minnesotan can I get?) until I was repeatedly reminded of the alligators within. So, I may not want to bring a gator home with me, but I do want an airboat for up at my cabin.

There's something about garden tours and carillons that just doesn't scream "CHILDREN." Bok Tower Gardens is meandering garden in Lake Wales designed by famed landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. a couple of hours from Orlando, if you drive slowly. The founder of **Bok Tower Gardens**, Edward W. Bok, was a highly successful publisher, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, respected humanitarian, and an advocate of world peace and the environment. What he left for the rest of us to enjoy are almost 50 acres of a contemplative and informal woodland setting offering a series of romantic recesses and tranquil resting spots, picturesque vistas and breathtaking views, as well as a bird sanctuary, reflection pool, and the Singing Tower. The Sing-

ing Tower is a 205-foot neo-Gothic pink stone tower that houses a 60-bell carillon. Strolling the gardens during one of the two daily carillon concerts is a guaranteed afternoon of serenity.

On my life's Bucket List is a hot-air balloon ride. **Bob's Balloon Rides** did not disappoint. We woke up in the wee hours of the morning and rode out to the country with a bunch of other vans hauling trailers and tourists; like storm-chasers, the balloon pros know where to go. We assisted in launching our balloons and suddenly found ourselves up in the air with the only instruction being to listen when it was time to land and not touch anything we're not supposed to. I followed directions and managed to not even throw my iPhone off the side, which is something that you'd expect would happen fairly frequently. We soared over swamps and marshes; the air turned a fragrant citrus scent when we were over an orange grove, and we landed without mishap in a pasture of cows. Our tour ended at a fruit stand at which we could buy some oranges to go, but our morning's adventure ended with a champagne brunch back in town. It was full of incomparable sights and soaring, all with a knowledgeable and personable crew with Bob's Balloon Rides.

RENT A CAR

Unfortunately, we couldn't ride around Orlando by airboat or hot air balloon all week, so I'd recommend renting a car. This was my first trip to Orlando and I kept trying to strategize using public transportation or taxis...but the economical and easy answer was a weekly rental. For what it would have cost for a taxi ride from the airport to our resort and back, we got a zippy little Chevy for three people for seven days. No brainer. The parking was easy, which I didn't expect to be the case. If you'd like, you can ride a circulator trolley on International Drive called I-Ride, but when most of the attractions (listed in the Adult-Oriented Tourist Traps above) on this list have their own parking lots, it seems odd to take a trolley. Did I mention the part about a car being a little self-regulated civilization? Yes. With your own mode of transportation, nobody gets in without your consent and that includes people under the age of 36, in our case.

For more information about any of these attractions, go to www.visitorlando.com. ■



Nouveau Vegas

By Andy Lien

I recently went on a whirlwind trip to Las Vegas. It was all gay, all the time. We packed our nights with a number of gay bucket list items: Chelsea Handler at **The Chelsea**, **The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas**; the Chippendales at **Rio Las Vegas**; and the diva herself, Celine Dion, at **The Colosseum**, **Caesars Palace**. Or, you can do like we did, and mix your dining with your entertainment at **Rose. Rabbit. Lie.** at **The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas**, where, whilst listening to the most delightful music, I was ruined forever because I will never taste such wonderful beef stroganoff as I did at that meal. Each day was spent exploring and learning about what is new in Las Vegas, as well as what's been renewed. Here's the short list for you to look into for your next Vegas experience, but for more of what's new and renewed in Las Vegas, visit the website of the **Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority** at www.lasvegas.com.





Above: High Roller Experience at dusk; Below: High Roller Pod. Photos courtesy of Las Vegas News Bureau
Opposite (top to bottom): ARIA - Jean Georges Steakhouse; ESPA at Vdara. Photos courtesy of City Center Land, LLC.

EMBRACE THE ARIA EXPERIENCE

Our schedules were booked solid, the lights on the Strip never dim, the din is always that of lively noise...but I couldn't tell from my cocoon of solitude, thanks to our accommodations at **Vdara Hotel & Spa at ARIA Las Vegas**. If you've never been to Las Vegas before, this complex will be just part of the busy environment of the Las Vegas Strip. But, if you're familiar with the Strip, this might be a whole new development; one worth exploring. Snugly set near The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas and the Bellagio, I spent my spare moments in a suite at the boutique Vdara. With no gaming, no children, and no smoking, it was an oasis of calm. I luxuriated in the sleek surroundings and drank in the view of the Bellagio fountains, the Eiffel Tower, and the High Roller from the windows of my suite as I devoured my Short Ribs Eggs Benedict with French Press Coffee that room service delivered prior to my morning spa appointment at **ESPA**. The spa was other-worldly in its tranquility, my 80-minute personalized massage was the perfect answer to getting our biggest issue of the year to press before winging off to Vegas; my own wings needed some loosening. One note is that I'd call ahead to discuss changing room accommodations for gender non-conforming individuals. We were split into areas for men and women, but you need to be comfortable if you're going to be able to relax...and I'm guessing ESPA can make that happen.

Because of its relationship with **ARIA Resort & Casino**, Vdara guests enjoy a number of dining options. The in-suite room service was dreamy, there was a grab-and-go or dine-in **Market Cafe Vdara** in the lobby, and every morning saw a line-up at the **Starbucks** that even brought the poor Starbucks-less souls from the Bellagio to our Vdara in zombie-like droves. ARIA offers expanded fine dining in multiple restaurants; our particular journey brought us to **Sage** for luscious craft cocktails and to **Jean Georges Steakhouse** for a feast to end all feasts. Having been to the Jean Georges in Vancouver (and not being a huge fan of fish or seafood), this steakhouse was sensual bliss. We shared dishes and I was able to sample nearly anything my heart desired, the favorites were numerous: Waygu Beef Carpaccio with truffle oil and wrapped around Comte cheese; Baby Iceberg Salad with blue cheese and bacon; and Aspen Ridge Dry Aged Rib Eye with the sides of Creamed Corn and Black Truffle Mac & Cheese. The desserts didn't hurt my feelings, either.



VISIT THE LINQ

Just off the Strip, behind the Tropicana, is **The LINQ**. Shops and restaurants fill the needs (and wants) of any of the travelers. Sit down for a meal at **Flour & Barley** (the meatballs appetizer is so very tasty and the muffuletta sandwich was my drug of choice) and be sure to visit the **Polaroid Fotobar** where you can plug into your social media accounts and print photos and keepsakes from your trip or the life you're escaping from while in Vegas. I chose to print photos for a shadowbox of my favorite *Lavender* covers of this year, which I was able to walk out with after spending some time at the Polaroid museum portion of the complex. It was fast, easy, and oh-so-satisfying for this photophile. Then, without a doubt, the **High Roller Experience** will give you the breathtaking views of Las Vegas as you are perched atop the world's tallest observation wheel at 550 feet high. Go during the day or enjoy the view at dusk when all the lights are starting to glow against the scenery of the City of Sin.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ➔



Downtown Container Park. Photo by Emily Wilson/
Downtown Project; **SlotZilla.** Photos by David Tingey

GO DOWNTOWN

Away from the Strip is the Downtown area, with the brand new **Downtown Container Park** and the **Fremont Experience**. The Downtown Container Park is a family-friendly outdoor shopping, dining, and entertainment attraction. Made completely of shipping containers stacked upon each other, this unique venue offers a variety of boutique shops and food outlets. I made sure to patronize the gay-owned **Sweet Spot Candy Shop** for some noshes after having lunch at **Bin 702** where I reveled in the Avocado Wedge Salad (spinach, avocado wedges, spiced candied walnuts, and house-made honey mustard vinaigrette) and the Grilled Cheese (havarti on brioche). Delicious. After lunch, take time to meander over to the Fremont Street Experience (or do it all at night when everything's lit up). Try your luck at some of the casinos or by ziplining above it all on the new **SlotZilla Experience**. (Since I don't like leaving the ground, I got to hang out below and hold my travel companions' belongings while videotaping them as they flew above my head. I can attest to the fact that much fun was had...which you can be certain that I posted on Facebook.)

GET YOUR VITAMIN D WITH FAMILY

There are two prominent gay pool parties in Vegas, both with different vibes and different crowds, both with a bunch of scantily clad people getting their share of Vitamin D. **Xposed!** at **The New Tropicana Las Vegas** is set in a somewhat private pool area, keeping people close together and thumping along with the reverberating music. Cabanas can be rented and bottle service can be bought while watching dancers on platforms gyrate above the pools, and seemed somewhat necessary for a little bit of reprieve from the party. At **Temptation Sundays at the Luxor Hotel & Casino**, the vast pool area was populated by all sorts of swimmers and loungers; our party was just a fraction of the wide-open water fun. The atmosphere was a bit more relaxed, and more conducive to lounging in the pool and talking above the music, which is what most people preferred to do as the pool became standing-room-only as the afternoon progressed. Cabanas were more optional than not, since most everyone wanted to be out in the fun. ■



Temptation Sundays at the Luxor Hotel & Casino. Photos courtesy of MGM Resorts International

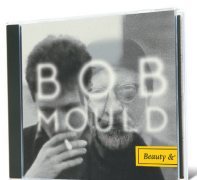
OUR SCENE

ARTS & CULTURE | ON THE RECORD | BY ED HUYCK



RÖYKSOPP AND ROBYN *Do It Again*

This mini album may be a bit too cool for the summer. A sort of summit between Scandinavian pop artists (Röyksopp is from Norway, Robyn from Sweden), the cuts here merge Robyn's sterling pop sensibilities with the electronic pulse of the duo. The groove on the nearly 10-minute opener "Monument" takes its sweet time to get going, but offers plenty of rewards for the patient listener. The middle tracks, especially singles "Sayit" and "Do It Again," bring a bit more heat, but this is an album of chilly pulses rather than steamy dance-floor packers. That is showcased with the bookend, the moody "Inside the Idle Hour Club." It's the kind of record to put in during the after party, when searching for chill out space.



BOB MOULD *Beauty & Ruin*

Over the last few years, Bob Mould has been looking back—whether it is with his autobiography or the reissue of several seminal albums (come on, could we get some real work done on the Hüsker Dü catalogue?)—and that comes to a head in his latest raging album. The buzz saw guitars, driving tunes, and brutally honest lyrics are intact, with Mould taking a look at the decades of his life. Mould has never been shy about shining a light on his own flaws and troubles, and that comes out in the best way possible here. We get the brilliant raging pop of "I Don't Know You Anymore," the slightly gentler music (if not lyrics) of "Forgiveness" to the sharp elder-statesmen punk of "Hey Mr. Gray."



Hedwig and the Angry Inch

Two decades on, and the story of Hedwig (the transgender East German abandoned and jilted by love on every side) still packs a punch. This cast album, the third for the show, hews pretty close to the earlier ones (the spoof love theme from *Hurt Locker: The Musical* has been added; get your tickets now). It doesn't matter. *Hedwig* is a rock musical done right, and the latest actor to don the fake breasts, Neil Patrick Harris, adds a fresh sneer to the tunes here. The music melds punk and glam rock into a tasty stew, and both versions of "Wicked Little Town" still move me to tears. Since I can't afford to fly to New York, this will have to do.



LANA DEL REY *Ultraviolence*

While I'm still pretty skeptical about Del Rey's quick rise to fame on the back of *Born to Die*, which was, at best, a half-assed set of songs, *Ultraviolence* (suddenly, I see Malcolm McDowell in a bowler hat) does have signs of improvement. This time out, Del Rey takes more cues from the likes of Tori Amos, producing a set of songs that at least stick in the mind for more than a few minutes. She's aided by wunder-producer Dan Auerbach, who helps to give her music some of the spark missing from her earlier, sleepy hits. For example, the layers on the title cut helps let the song seep into the mind, where it can become quite affecting. It makes me willing to keep listening. ■

OUR SCENE

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Kinky

A Poem Cycle

1. I'm not kinky.
I'm not kinky. I'm not.
I'm not kinky. Really, I'm not.
I'm really not kinky.
I'm not really kinky.
I'm not *that* kinky.
I'm not kinky like *that*.
I don't consider myself kinky.

2. I'm not kinky, but sometimes I wonder.
I'm not that kinky, but I enjoy a little slap and tickle sometimes.
I'm not really kinky, but sometimes I just need to get beaten up a bit, you know?
I'm not, like, kinky, but, you know, sometimes I sorta am.
I'm not exactly kinky, but I maybe skirt the edges of it a bit.
I'm not predominantly kinky, but sometimes I play on the margins a little.
I'm not usually kinky, but there are times . . .
I'm not completely kinky, but I'm kinky enough.
I'm not totally kinky, but I'm mostly kinky.
I'm not 100% kinky. Like, maybe, 75%?

3. I'm not kinky, unless you call liking to get spanked kinky.
I'm not kinky, other than having all these piercings.
I'm not kinky, aside from my love of cross-dressing.
I'm not kinky, except that I like to have my tits played with. Really hard. Does that count?

4. I'm not really kinky, but whips and chains excite me.
I'm not really kinky, but I get off on getting tied up.
I'm not really kinky, but the thought of submission makes me hard.
I'm not really kinky, but I could be for the right person.
I'm not really kinky, but I could be for you.

5. I might be kinky. Does worshipping boots make me kinky?
I'm probably kinky. I like to flog people.
I'm definitely kinky. All my slaves say so.

6. Does this corset make me look kinky?
Does this singletail make me look kinky?
Does this fisting glove make me look kinky?

7. Wow, you mean I'm kinky?

8. I'm kinky, but you'd never know it.
I'm kinky, but I don't look like it.
I'm kinky, but I don't show it.
I'm kinky, but I don't talk about it.
I'm sort of kinky, but I don't act like it.
I'm kind of kinky, but I don't do much about it.
I'm a bit kinky.
I'm a little kinky.
I'm somewhat kinky.
I'm mostly kinky.
I'm pretty much kinky.
I'm really kinky.
I'm totally kinky.
I'm completely kinky.
I'm 100% kinky.
I am so fucking kinky!

9. I'm so kinky that even my hair is kinky.
Even my pubic hair is kinky.
Even my spine is kinky.

I am kinkier than ten cat-o-nine-tails,
a thousand floggers,
a million singletails,

I'm so kinky that there are no hankie code colors for what I'm into.
They haven't been invented yet.
Perhaps something like ultraviolet—
Not visible to the naked eye.

10. See him? I'm kinkier than him.
See her? The one with the latex kitten suit? I'm kinkier than her.
The guy with the leather and chains?
The gal with the goth look?
The guy with all the needles stuck in him?
The gal in the vacuum frame?
The guy who's tied up in a cage?
The gal who looks like Bettie Page?
I'm kinkier than any of them.
I'm kinkier than all of them put together.
I'm kinkier than every porn star and every politician combined.
And that's pretty kinky.

11. See that blonde with the violet wand? I'm kinkier than that.
See that frail with the singletail? I'm kinkier than that.
See that bear in his underwear?
See that jock wearing just a sock?
See that dude flexing in the nude?
I'm kinkier than that.

See that Jack with the marked-up back? I'm kinkier than that.
See that Jane in the lock and chain? I'm kinkier than that.
See that John getting pissed upon?
See that Stu with the wild tattoo?
See that Nick with the pierced dick?
I'm kinkier than that.

See that Newt in the latex suit? I'm kinkier than that.
See that Faye in the bustier? I'm kinkier than that.
See that Norm in the uniform?
See that pup getting all tied up?
See that chick with the snap-on dick?
I'm kinkier than that.

12. I'm too kinky for my jeans
Too kinky for my jock
Too kinky for my boots
Too kinky for my gloves
Too kinky for my vest
Too kinky for my hankies
Too kinky for my harness
But I'm not too kinky for you.

13. You ask, just how kinky am I?
How kinky am I?
I don't know.
Are you ready to find out?



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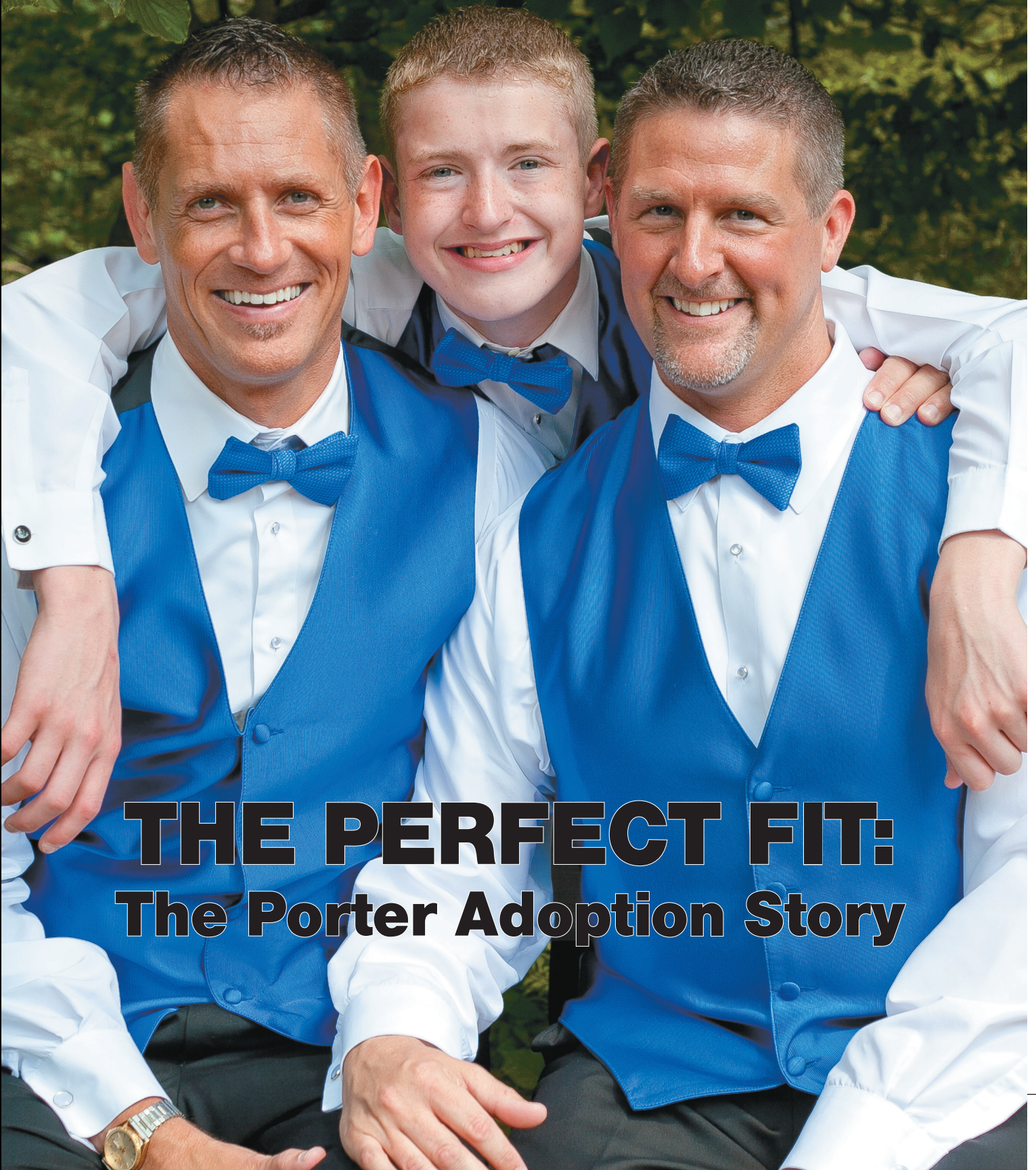
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Children & Family

THE PERFECT FIT: The Porter Adoption Story





Photos of the Porter family show a happy teen between two tall men with joyous eyes. The smiles of the three men are so heartfelt—and so natural—that one could assume the trio has been smiling together like this their whole lives. But this family is new; it was a little over a year ago when Leon, age 13, became the legal son of Dan Porter and Tony (McClay) Porter. In the winter of 2013, Dan (a Minnesota school social worker) and Tony (a stay-at-home dad and activist) joined the thousands of GLBT couples across the country who have made the rewarding decision to become adoptive parents. Now a complete family, Dan and Tony Porter experience the joy of parenthood every day, and Leon is blessed to have two loving fathers.

Dan and Tony's love story begins in April of 2011, when the two connected through an online dating site. What was supposed to be a brief lunch date turned into the two talking for several hours. Tony adds, "We hit it off, and neither of us wanted to leave!" After a second date on Cinco de Mayo, Tony invited Dan to attend a family wedding in South Carolina for their third date. Once Dan met Tony's "awesome, loving, and very welcoming" family, the two knew that their connection was something special.

As the couple shared their

lives with each other, they realized that their love was meant to last a lifetime. On October 17th, 2013, Dan surprised Tony with tickets he "won" to see Illusion Theater's *Love and Marriage* show. Though they had seen the show previously, that night's show was going to be a bit more special. Dan had secretly created a video for Tony that played right before intermission. The video (set to Bruno Mars's *Marry You*) showed photos of the couple through all their adventures, and set Dan up to ask for Tony's hand in marriage. Tony, however, was unaware and oblivious of what was happening, and had to be told to pay attention.

Tony recalls, "It's funny how oblivious I was to what was happening. I remember thinking, 'I don't remember this song in the first show.' I still didn't get it... but when it clicked, it was amazing, and I'll never forget it."

Dan says, "Tony didn't even get that I had planned this until the very end!" Finally, when Dan got on bended knee in front of a thrilled audience, Tony figured it out and said yes. Their son Leon then appeared on stage for a special toast, and the couple enjoyed celebratory champagne.

The couple recently tied the knot on August 2 at the White Bear Unitarian Universalist Church, surrounded by over 200 family and friends from

across the country and around the world. The men chose to have their wedding at their church because of how supportive the congregation is of marriage equality. Dan and Tony exchanged vows and rings, and headed off to a reception at the Sheraton Hotel in Minnetonka to celebrate their marriage. Dan says, "We really felt welcome and at home, and everything went off without a hitch. It was a perfect day."

CREATING A FAMILY THROUGH ADOPTION

Although Dan and Tony were just recently wed, they knew long before that they wanted to have a family together. The couple began family planning in 2013. Dan says, "I've always wanted to have kids. It's my passion." Based on Dan's work with children in schools, they decided that they would make the biggest impact by adopting children from the foster system.

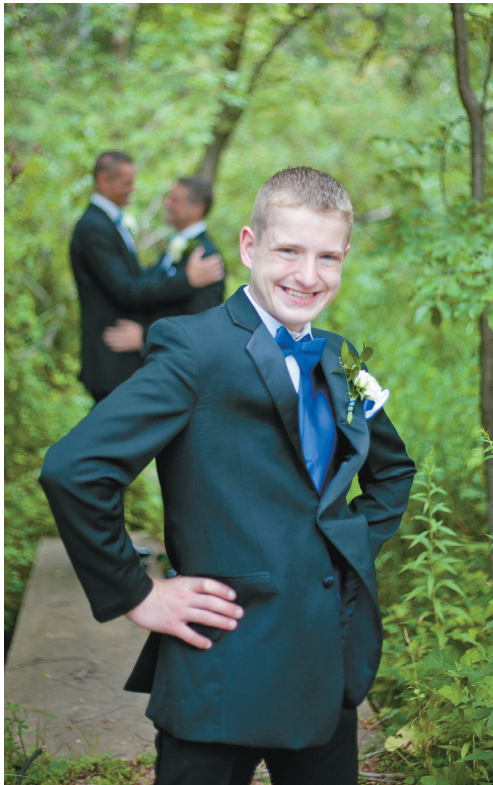
Tony states, "Though we did look at different options, we knew that we didn't need to have a biological connection to our child. There are usually over 300 children waiting to be placed in homes in Minnesota alone." Dan's experiences with the social system made him aware of the need for parents who are willing to adopt an older child. Tony adds, "It was

important to us to give a home to a child that might be overlooked."

Dan and Tony began the adoption process by attending a two-day information session for potential adoptive families. After receiving much of the information they needed, they decided to continue through the adoption process. Dan researched adoption agencies known for their work with GLBT families, and the couple chose to use Children's Home Society and Family Services in St. Paul. (CHSFS recently merged with Lutheran Social Services to better serve their children and families.)

The process began with a home study, where a social worker evaluated the environment Dan and Tony could provide for a child. With a social worker designated to work with the family and an additional social worker set to advocate for the child, these home studies are used to create child and parent profiles to match children with suitable potential families. Then the matching process began, where Dan and Tony perused child profiles to find a child that would fit well with their family. Though the couple initially intended to adopt a set of siblings, they couldn't ignore their feelings when the profile of young Leon was placed before them. Leon was an older

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42 ➔



child with special needs who had been in the system for two years. Tony says, "We fell in love with him immediately. We knew this is our child."

After determining that Leon would be a perfect fit for their family, Leon moved in on June 3, 2013. Leon's adoption was finalized on December 13, 2013, with both parents being able to legally adopt Leon at the same time (Minnesota is one of the few states that allows legal two-parent adoption). When their family was complete, Dan and Tony were amazed at how quickly and effortlessly the process went. Through their whole experience, Dan notes that they were never met with any bias due to their sexuality, nor were there any hurdles they had to jump as a same-sex couple going through the adoption process.

In addition to the ease of completing the adoption process, Dan and Tony were blessed that Leon transitioned smoothly into their family; it was like he was meant to be their son. Tony says, "He came in with no fear, he was so open and loving." Dan notes that Leon's social worker prepared Leon for having two fathers by showing him a video about different types of families. Leon wasn't fazed by the possibility of having two dads. Dan adds,

"He didn't care; he just wanted a family no matter what." It seems that young Leon was matched perfectly with Dan and Tony. Not only does Leon have an "amazing, fun personality that matches" his fathers', but there is a strong physical resemblance between Leon and his fathers. Dan notes, "Everyone thinks we look biological, that he's not even adopted!"

The Porter family also received special recognition in 2013, when they were profiled by the Adoptive Family Portrait Project, a project created by Voices for Adoption to raise awareness of adoptive issues across the country. The 2013 Adoptive Family Portrait Project focused on older adoptive children and children with special needs, profiling one family from each state. The Porters shared their story, which was included in a pamphlet that was distributed to all the Senators in Washington, D.C., including Al Franken. Dan notes that Franken has their photo hanging up in his office, and Minnesotan friends who visit Franken's office are thrilled to see the Porter family profile there.

Dan and Tony encourage other same-sex couples to consider adoption when starting a family, noting the severe need for families in Minnesota alone. Tony's work as a vol-

unteer guardian ad litem (a court-appointed advocate who represents the best interest of a child in court proceedings) has given him the opportunity to see how children can "quickly fall through the cracks" of the foster system. Tony notes, "There are so many children that need the love...If you're thinking about adoption, just do it. It's such a rewarding experience."

Dan adds that he believes there is a unique connection between GLBT people and children in the system. "There's a neat connection between GLBT communities and adoption because many GLBT people do not have supportive families and all the kids in the system didn't receive the support they needed from their families." He adds that, due to their own family experiences, many GLBT parents can look at situations differently and recognize what their child needs. In addition to helping children, Dan says that adopting a child has enriched their lives by making them feel like a complete family. "This whole process has solidified and made our bond [as a couple] richer and more meaningful."

BACK TO SCHOOL

As fathers of an older child, Dan and Tony utilized their experiences within the school

system and social services to help Leon adjust into school life. Because of Leon's special needs, Tony became a stay-at-home father to help ensure normalcy and structure in Leon's daily routine. But Tony does far more than many stay-at-home dads; in addition to volunteering as a guardian ad litem, Tony joined the school PTA and volunteers his time weekly within the school system. This involvement has allowed Tony to meet Leon's classmates and "normalize" their family situation. Tony states that the school system has been overwhelmingly supportive, right down to the parents of other students who have welcomed the Porter family with open arms.

Dan and Tony believe their positive experiences are due to the fact that they make an effort to be extremely visible. Dan's job as a school social worker allowed him to be familiar with most people in the district, and he was able to utilize those resources to create a support network for their family. Dan suggests that parents who are unfamiliar with a school system become acquainted with teachers and administration so any questions or concerns that arise may be answered quickly. Tony adds that volunteering or attending school functions allows you to "be seen, be present, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44 ➔



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be involved. It helps both the students and the parents.”

In addition to getting involved in the school, the Porters networked with other GLBT families at events organized by the Family Equality Council. The FEC provides many resources for GLBT families, along with social opportunities for families of all kinds. One particular event that the Porters really enjoy is the FEC Family Camp, a four-day event that focuses on GLBT families. There, Dan and Tony networked with other parents, Leon did activities with youth from GLBT families, and (most importantly) they celebrated their family and what makes them special. Dan and Tony suggest the camp for all GLBT families, and they intend to continue attending for the next couple of years.

But Dan and Tony don't stop there when it comes to advocating for GLBT families and improving the school environment for all children. Dan and Tony recently both applied and were accepted to sit on the newly-formed School Safety Technical Assistance Council for the Minnesota Department of Education. This council's goal is to assist schools with the implementation of the new Safe and Supportive Minnesota Schools Law, which transformed Minnesota's anti-bullying laws from the weakest in the country to the strongest. The bill clearly defines bullying and sets expectations for responses and consequences in any bullying situation.

Dan notes that the council will focus on the education and development of programs that assist schools and families, and they will also observe trends and issues that commonly occur within the schools. He adds that the “council will create materials that will support schools and make schools safer for everyone.” Though Dan and Tony have only dealt with one bullying situation since Leon has been adopted, they understand that children from GLBT families can easily become targets for bullying. They hope their work on the council will protect GLBT students as well as any other students, making schools a more welcoming place for all.

What's next for the Porter family? After the busy school year ahead, Dan and Tony plan to take their honeymoon. And their cozy family might get a bit larger: their positive experience with Leon's adoption (not to mention the joy of being parents) has encouraged Dan and Tony to consider adopting additional children, allowing Leon to have the opportunity of being a wonderful big brother. But best of all, the Porters get to look forward to sharing each day with each other, surrounded by the love of a family. ■

ADVICE FROM DAN & TONY

Here are a few tips and ways that have helped our family in working with schools and ways to support our children:

Be as visible and involved as possible and/or as much as your son or daughter asks you to be. Our son asked us to volunteer at school events. We attend everything (even if only one of us can make it). It's a great way to meet parents and students that are in classes with our son, and it creates opportunity for dialogue.

Attend all school functions: concerts (our son is in choir), volunteer on the PTA, introduce yourself to teachers, attend back to school nights

We made sure that the principal and his teachers knew he has gay dads, and we were available to support the school. We also wanted to be involved in helping in any way we could.

Be proactive and tell them how you would like them to address and respond to other children's questions about your family.

It's ok to help teachers with language that describes our families; school staff are amazing, but we can't expect them to know everything. They will more than likely be overjoyed you made the effort; what a great way to support each other.

Talk to your kids: it's an ongoing process (daily check-ins on highs and lows). They will tell you the pressing issues they face and the topics that are on their minds. Help them solve problems and come up with solutions. But be realistic—children will tease. What is important is how it was handled, and how it can be handled next time.

Build resilience in your kids. Help them feel proud of who they are and appreciate differences in how all families are. Remind them that diversity helps us all, and no two families are alike.

Help your child find adults at school they can talk with. Ask your school who those adults might be. Then go and talk to them and let them know who you are, who your child is, and align with them.

Start school routines early (meals, bedtime, wake-up) to help your child adjust back into routines.

Work to build a support network. The Family Equality Council is an organization through which we have found some GLBT parents with kids and families like ours. It also has some tips for back to school: www.familyequality.org/news_media/2012/08/22/1389/family_equality_council_releases_back-to-safe-schools_tool_kit

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Children & Family

RAINBOW RESOURCES: BACK TO SCHOOL

GLBT-FRIENDLY BACK TO SCHOOL SHOPPING GUIDE

As the school year draws nearer, retailers will stop at nothing to attract back-to-school shoppers. With all of the options, it can be hard to decipher which retailers deserve to be supported with a parent or guardian's spending power; factoring in which stores and brands are GLBT-friendly is an even more daunting task.

Of the major retailers, shoppers will be happy to know that many have a 100-percent score from the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). According to HRC, "a record 252 businesses nationwide achieved a perfect score of 100 percent and 2013 saw the largest growth in the survey's history with 54 new businesses participating."

Despite the growing number of companies with GLBT-friendly policies, there are many that either actively discriminate against GLBT-identified people or haven't filled out the HRC Corporate Equality Index (CEI) survey. The 2014 HRC Buying for Workplace Equality Guide (a concentrated version of the CEI survey) is divided into three categories: green, yellow, and red. Companies on the green list are the most inclusive with scores between 80 and 100 percent. Yellow companies are in the middle with scores between 46 and 79 percent and red companies have workplace equality scores between 0 and 45 percent.

According to HRC, "the businesses/brands that have not responded to the survey despite repeated attempts have been provided with an unof-

ficial, estimated score based on publicly available information that has been collected." Coincidentally, all of those businesses fall within the red category.

The criteria that HRC uses to rate each company include (among other things): employment benefits; equivalent spousal and partner medical benefits; transgender-inclusive health insurance coverage; organizational GLBT competency; competency training, resources, or accountability measures; and GLBT-specific efforts including recruiting, supplier diversity, marketing or advertising, philanthropy, or public support for GLBT equality under the law.

So where should parents and guardians who want to support GLBT-friendly establishments shop for their kids' new backpacks, lunch bags, school supplies, clothes, and shoes?

The retail establishments that achieved a 100-percent score include Nordstrom, Kmart/Sears/Lands End, Best Buy, Gap/Old Navy/Banana Republic, Nike, Levi-Strauss, Limited Brands (Bath and Body Works, Victoria's Secret, and others), Apple, Office Depot, Staples, Barnes & Noble, American Eagle, and Target.

Other retail outlets that fell within the green category include stores that received a 95 percent, such as JCPenney and Intel. Retail stores that received a 90 percent include Macys/Bloomingdales, Costco, Office Max, and Amazon.com.

A number of retail stores fell within the yellow category. The stores that received a 70 percent score include Overstock.com and the Jones Group (Anne Klein, Gloria Vanderbilt,

Nine West and others). L.L. Bean earned 65 percent while Brown Shoe (Famous Footwear, Naturalizer, Dr. Scholl's, and others) received 60 percent.

Only a few retail stores (with the exception of the companies that didn't fill out the survey) had scores in the red category, including Ikea.

Many retail stores that haven't filled out the survey have estimated scores between 30 and 0 percent. These stores include Bed Bath & Beyond, Radio Shack, Trader Joe's, J. Crew, Kohl's, Michaels, Urban Outfitters, Adidas, Burberry, Collective Brands (Keds, Payless, Saucony and others), Foot Locker, Nieman Marcus, Guess, VF (JanSport, Nautica, The North Face, Timberland, Vans and others), Fossil, Giorgio Armani, Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci, and Versace.

Download a copy of the Buyer's Guide, get the smartphone app, and more at www.hrc.org/apps/buyersguide.

GLSEN SAFE SPACE KIT

GLSEN (the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network) is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established in 1990, GLSEN works to create a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/ expression. Through their work, GLSEN seeks to develop school climates where difference is valued for the positive contribution it makes to creating a more vibrant and diverse community.

The organization launched the Safe Space Campaign to

place a Safe Space Kit in every middle and high school in the country and, between 2010 and 2013, they did just that.

The Safe Space Kit provides a program for action that school staff can take to create a positive learning environment for every student. Each kit contains:

- Guide to Being an Ally to GLBT Students that gives concrete strategies for supporting GLBT students, including how to educate about anti-GLBT bias and teaching respect for all people.
- 10 Safe Space stickers
- Safe Space poster

The kit also shows how to assess the school's climate, policies and practices, and outlines ways to advocate for change inside the school.

GLSEN says that the Safe Space Kit starts with a sticker. Placing a Safe Space sticker on an office door or window is a simple—but highly visible—first step that shows an adult's unwavering support for a student's safety. The kit also contains a poster that can be displayed throughout the school or on an office door to show support to GLBT students and let students know where their allies are should events of bullying occur.

However, sending one Safe Space Kit to every school is just the beginning for GLSEN. The work continues with supporting educators and GLBT students alike to make sure that every school is a safe and respectful place where students can thrive. Help make schools safer by purchasing a Safe Space Kit (\$15) for yourself or an educator you know at www.safespace.glsen.org.



GLBT SCHOLARSHIPS

It only takes a Google search to turn up scholarships for GLBT-identified students or research areas. The six listed below offer a starting point for those seeking financial assistance to further their education. They range from general to incredibly specific, just to show the variety in scholarships available and just how tailored they can be.

Point Foundation **www.pointfoundation.org**

Perhaps the largest source for GLBT scholarships is the Point Foundation. Point offers mentorship, leadership development and community service training to GLBTQ students. The Point Foundation provides not only money for tuition, books, and room and board, but also has a leadership program to help GLBT scholars succeed. From

their website: "We pay particular attention to those students who have lost the financial and social support of their families and/or communities as a result of revealing their sexual orientation or gender identity." Point Foundation awarded its first eight scholarships in 2002 and has since invested more than \$15 million in the programmatic support of its scholars. The amount of Point's annual scholarship support, which includes direct financial and programmatic assistance, averages \$25,000 per scholar each year.

League Foundation at AT&T LGBT Scholarship

www.leaguefoundation.org
League Foundation at AT&T Scholarships are available to lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender U.S. high school seniors who have demonstrated: a cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0

scale, significant involvement in community service, and acceptance to an accredited U.S. college or university. League offers \$1500 scholarships and several special \$2500 scholarships in honor of Matthew Shepard and Laurel Hester.

LGBT Journalism Scholarship

www.nlgja.org/students

The National Gay and Lesbian Journalists Association has several scholarships and internships for GLBT journalism students.

Malyon-Smith Scholarship Award for Graduate Psychology Students

www.apadivision44.org/honors/malyon-smith.php

For graduate students studying psychology the Malyon-Smith scholarship annually awards up to \$1000 graduate students in

psychology to advance research in the psychology of sexual orientation and gender identity.

National Gay Pilot's Association Scholarship **www.ngpa.org**

Planning on learning to fly? The National Gay Pilot's Association wants to help. Applicants must be pursuing a career as a professional pilot and must demonstrate that they make a contribution to the gay and lesbian community.

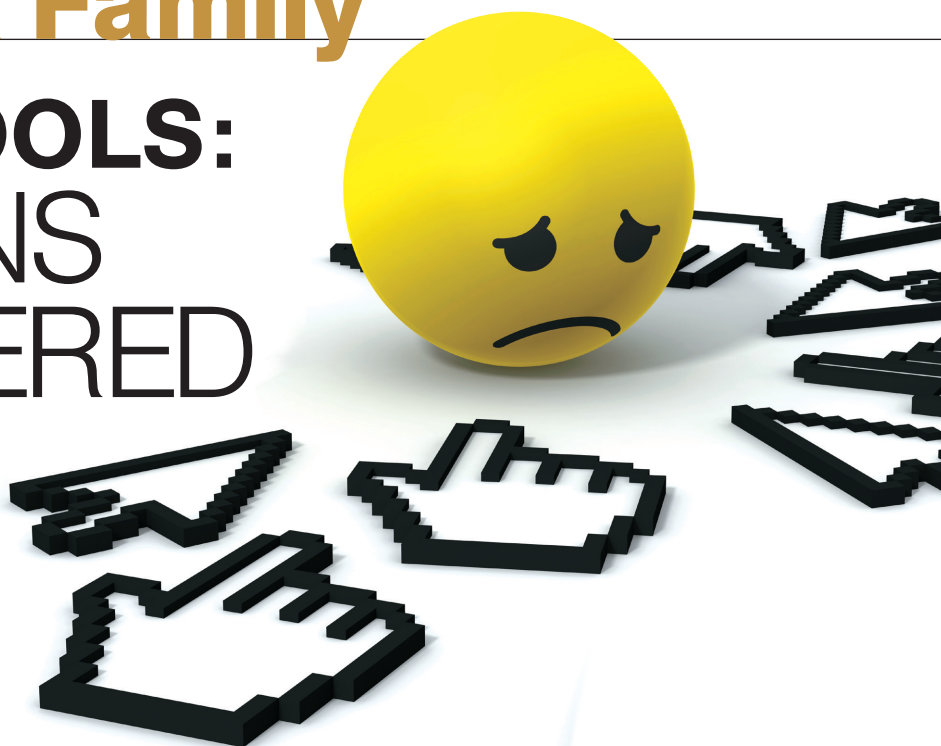
NWSA Lesbian Caucus Award

www.nwsa.org

If you are pursuing a career in social work and are interested in studying lesbians, the National Association of Social Workers Lesbian Caucus Award can set you up with a \$500 research award to continue your work. ■

Children & Family

SAFE SCHOOLS: QUESTIONS UNANSWERED



Amongst great excitement over the passing of Minnesota's more strict anti-bullying legislation this spring, there was also great concern that much was left up to individual school districts. Once the excitement faded away, questions remained to be asked regarding the logistics of this new legislation. Yes, the bill-turned-law gave a more comprehensive definition of bullying, but what did the new law actually do to combat bullying in Minnesota's schools?

As mentioned, the new legislation provides a comprehensive definition of bullying, including cyberbullying, which has become a significant issue for students as mobile technology has become increasingly available to them. All public districts and charter schools are also directed to adopt local policies to prevent and prohibit school bullying, including the designation of a staff member at each school to monitor and investigate reports of bullying behavior. The new law also created a School Safety Technical Assistance Center at the Minnesota Department of Education to help schools with training for teachers and staff, gather data on bullying in Minnesota schools, review best practices, and help school districts develop and implement anti-bullying policies at the local level.

Even with all of these new structures thanks to the law, it still seems that a lot of the work is left to the local level of authority. What kind of support is coming from the state to ensure that bullying is actually policed?

According to Josh Collins, the Director of Communications for the Minnesota Department of Education, there are several kinds of support that the state will provide. He notes that the legislation directed the department to create a model policy to advise local school districts and charter schools in implementing the different components of the act. Local school districts and charter schools may choose to adopt this model policy or develop their own policy as long as it meets the criteria specified in the legislation (including plans for the response to bullying, staff education, and the investigation of bullying reports).

Collins goes on to report that the department will continue (and expand) training to schools in "restorative practices," which are tools to resolving the harm caused by bullying for the student who is harmed, as well as the student who causes the harm. He also

says that the School Safety Technical Assistance Council is made up of students, parents, teachers, principals, judges, and officials involved in education, law enforcement, human rights, human services and corrections. "The council is tasked with providing leadership on multiple fronts," he says. "Including the establishment of norms and standards for prevention, intervention, and support for bullying prevention strategies, the advancement of evidence-based best practices, and various other activities."

But with districts having the option of adapting the state's example policy or creating their own, how are the districts going to take the language of the legislation and turn it into action in the schools? Collins says that the state will provide districts with support as they implement these policies and work with staff, parents, and students to understand the serious effects of bullying, and create a culture of safety and support.

Even with this support from the state, it still leaves a lot of the legwork to the individual districts. Who is in charge of overseeing that steps are actually being taken to prevent bullying in schools? The fact of the matter is, Minnesota is a local control state, meaning that local school boards are ultimately responsible for ensuring that state and federal laws are being followed.

"The department does provide oversight and compliance in a number of areas with districts. How that will apply to this legislation will be further developed with guidance from the School Safety Technical Assistance Council," Collins says. "The department will be collecting every district's anti-bullying policies as well as assurances from all districts that they are enforcing local policies that meet statutory requirements. Further guidance on measurement [of enforcement] will be developed in conjunction with the School Safety Technical Assistance Council."

With the council not meeting until September, it is unlikely that these gaps in the legislation will be resolved in time for the new school year. Questions will likely remain unanswered, at least for the time being, as the council gets up and running. However, with the 2014-2015 school year beginning, a lot of the groundwork has already been done and set the stage for the council to add finishing touches while school districts and charter schools across the state transition into meeting the new qualifications laid out under the legislation. ■

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Children & Family

A REFUGE FOR HOMELESS YOUTH



In a rare suburban venture aimed at tackling a growing statewide problem, city officials, churches, civic groups and others are working together in Brooklyn Park to open a shelter for homeless teens. The facility will be the first suburban youth shelter with emergency beds, as well as the more common transitional housing.

Funding for the project mostly came from the city of Brooklyn Park itself. This spring, the Brooklyn Park Economic Development Authority board unanimously approved using up to \$800,000 in excess tax-increment funds to build or convert a quadplex into a 12-bed shelter. Brooklyn Park has an agreement with Avenues for Homeless Youth, a nonprofit agency that runs a shelter in north Minneapolis, to operate the new shelter, said Deb Loon,

executive director. She said Avenues has won a \$152,000 Homeless Youth Act state grant and has secured \$55,000 in other donations for first-year operating costs.

Minnesota has 120 emergency shelter beds (nearly all in Minneapolis and St. Paul) and about 600 beds for transitional housing with longer term, supportive services for homeless youth, but that is nowhere near enough. The most recent statewide homeless count, by the Wilder Foundation in October 2012, found 1,151 unaccompanied minors ages 18 to 21 who were homeless, about 30 percent more than in 2006. Of those, 674 were in the metro area. The conservative count includes only those found in shelters and elsewhere, but officials believe many others go undetected. Wilder reported that 25 percent of the youth

said they had been turned away by a full shelter in the previous three months.

Avenues for Homeless Youth operates five housing programs for homeless youth. The Brooklyn Park shelter and transitional housing program, aptly called Brooklyn Avenues, broke ground on August 14, set to open its doors in early 2015. The space will be leased to Avenues for Homeless Youth for \$1 per year to operate the program.

Brooklyn Avenues will be a large home in Brooklyn Park where 12 young people from the northwest suburbs who are experiencing homelessness will be able to live and access the intensive supports they need to move onto stable living. "Like our Minneapolis program, the youth will be ages 16 through 20; the building is designed to look and feel like a large home

(5,000 square feet)," Loon says. "It will have 12 small, individual bedrooms each with a twin bed, small desk, and closet, as well as a commercial kitchen, living room, dining room, youth computer lab, staff offices, counseling room, and multi-purpose room for group activities."

The new building will allow Avenues to meet its goal of getting homeless youth off the streets and out of harm's way, but enable them to stay within or close to their home community. Brooklyn Avenues will provide homeless youth a safe and home-like place to stabilize, address their crisis needs, begin healing from their trauma, build trusting relationships, and start addressing their long-term goals.

But with such drastic statistics regarding the mass numbers of homeless youth,

why would the new facility only accommodate 12 beds? There are several reasons for sizing the program this way. Perhaps the most realistic reason is budgetary. Staffing needs increase as the bed numbers increase and it would also require a larger facility. With an operating budget estimated at \$600,000 as it is, a larger facility is an unreasonable expectation. Instead, Loon says, "We would like to see other suburban communities follow Brooklyn Park's lead and enter into partnership with Avenues or other homeless youth-serving agencies to create similar programs for homeless youth from their area, so those young people also can find support within or very near their home communities."

The youth are referred to Avenues by school counselors, police, street and school outreach workers, and numerous other nonprofit and public partners, including faith-based organizations. With an average length of stay expected to range around four months (but could be up to 18 months, if needed), their stay at Brooklyn Avenues is intended to be short-term or transitional, but Loon says her team's commitment to them for continued support is long-term. The program is designed to be unique to each young person's needs and circumstances, so the stay will range from very short to over a year.

"When a youth moves out of the program, our case management team stays with them, to the degree they need and want continued support," Loon says. "We also work very hard to connect youth with other resources and adults in their community, so they have a circle of support to guide them as they move into adulthood."

When youth arrive at Avenues, the first priority is to allow them to settle in, stabilize, and begin to build a trusting relationship with staff and volunteers. First, all basic needs are met, so they no longer need to worry about food and shelter. They will have access to

a personal bedroom and shared bathroom, three meals per day, personal hygiene supplies, laundry facilities, clothing, and transportation assistance.

As Avenues staff identifies the youths' crisis needs, they will strive to be met through the professional staff and connections with partners. These include addressing physical and mental health as well as legal issues (including connecting youth for help with immigration issues). Once these needs are met and youth feel stable and can start looking forward, they will have access to a full-range of supportive services to guide them through setting and pursuing goals for their futures. The program includes case management, family counseling, education support, employment and job training support, and independent living skills training and practice.

Although the new space won't be specific to GLBT homeless youth, Avenues also offers a GLBT Host Home Program, supporting GLBT homeless youth in supportive, volunteer homes throughout the Twin Cities area. Described as "outside the system," the GLBT program is truly community-based and volunteer-driven. "All participants—youth and hosts—come to the programs on a volunteer basis; youth are never 'placed' and hosts are not compensated," Loon says. "Hosts go through a rigorous screening and training process and youth are referred by folks who know them well. But the process of matching youth and hosts is actually youth-driven; it is the young person who reads the prospective hosts files and decides who they would like to meet."

The host home program recognizes that young people, especially GLBT youth of color, experience systemic barriers as they live their lives. Many of them have had mainstream systems experience that has not served them well in their lives. The host home programs are intentionally designed to give

youth the opportunity (often, for the first time in their lives) to determine their future, but to do so in a supportive environment.

Loon says, "The wise people who created our host home model visualized a program that helped the community take care of and provide non-paternalistic support to its young people, as opposed to social services agencies deciding a course of action for young people."

In addition to the unique feature of allowing youth to choose their own destinies, Avenues' three host home programs are 100 percent supported by the community and do not seek government funding. "These are very efficient programs, given the contribution of home and food the hosts provide on a volunteer basis," Loon says. "Each program has a manager who does community outreach, host recruitment, training and support, and coordination with the youths' case managers."

So, why have a program unique to GLBT youth? The GLBT Host Home Program was created at a time when youth shelters and housing programs recognized they were failing to provide competent support to queer youth, who made up a large percentage of the homeless youth population. According to Loon, this was driven mostly by their GLBTQ staff with help from community advocates. However, GLBT-run organizations at the time did not have the infrastructure to create shelter or housing programs, so the community decided it made more sense to have a homeless youth organization develop a GLBTQ-specific program.

Homeless youth programs today are better at providing culturally competent support for GLBT homeless youth. But the GLBT Host Home Program still has an important place in the community. They also have the opportunity to find support outside of licensed programs and systems that may have failed them historically. For the youth who participate in the program, they experience living in a home

with caring adults who accept them fully for who they are and share their resources without expectations.

The reality is that GLBT youth homelessness is about half due to family conflict that grows out of lack of support around sexual orientation and gender expression/identity (commonly called "family rejection") and half due to the many reasons all youth face homelessness: poverty, family crisis, mental illness, abuse, and more.

"Every youth's story is unique, which is why we need a myriad of programs and opportunities that are youth-centered in the community," Loon says. "The majority of GLBTQ youth experiencing homelessness are youth of color, mostly African-American, so issues related to racial and economic disparities are at the core of their homelessness. We would like to have more hosts of color in the program."

For Loon, who originally joined Avenues as a consultant and interim executive director, she found her passion. Loon planned on staying 9-12 months. "About three years into my 'interim' status, I finally admitted I was staying," she says. "It is such a privilege to watch young people move from fear and survival, to regaining their smile and sense of self-worth, and then to moving on to achieving their goals. These young people are incredible, in spite of what they have experienced and faced. They are resilient, strong, wise beyond belief, and funny. I love watching their personalities emerge while they live with us. And these youth are able to move forward with what really amounts to very little support. They have tremendous potential that we, as a community, cannot afford to squander."

To discover the various opportunities presented by Avenues for Homeless Youth or to get involved, go to www.avenuesforyouth.org. ■

Children & Family



Shelly Bean the Sports Queen

In 1993, Shelly Boyum-Breen was my role model. She was “Coach Shelly” to me then. Mom and Dad had sent me to St. Ben’s for Blazer Basketball Camp with a couple hundred other middle school girls, in my middle school memory at least, and I had never been more nervous. I was living away from home for a *week*. And each day was devoted to basketball, a sport I desperately wanted to be good at, but despite my tomboyish demeanor, I was just pathetically average. Still, I hung on every word the camp coaches and counselors said, none more so than Coach Shelly.

I was in awe the moment I saw her. Immediately, she was “who I wanted to be when I grew up.” Tall, short-spiky brown hair, cracking jokes, twinkle in the eye, big smile. From what I could tell, Shelly was a GREAT basketball player and all the other campers were just as enamored as I. Some of the pictures I still have from camp show: 1.) campers hanging

all over Coach Shelly during “movie night;” 2.) Shelly grinning in the doorway of the dorm room I shared with three other over-eager middle school girls; and 3.) me, sweaty—horrible permed bowl cut and all—smiling idiotically with a giant mouth-guard still in, standing next to another camp counselor.

I don’t remember much more about that basketball camp, but I always remembered Shelly. Which is why, two years ago, when I saw her walking down the streets of Minneapolis (both of us on our way to a Lynx game), I had a serious case of small-world syndrome and recognized her immediately, twenty years later. As is the norm when you run into old acquaintances, we became Facebook friends, and I noticed she was writing a children’s book series. And not just any book series, but that of a rough-and-tumble little girl who loves sports. After a successful Kickstarter campaign, the *Shelly Bean the Sports Queen* series (illustrated

by Marieka Heinlen), which includes the titles *Plays a Game of Catch*, *Hoops It Up*, and *Skates at the Rink*, is now available for pre-order.

The “real” Shelly Bean humored me with a Q & A.

Why write the Shelly Bean series?

Shelly Boyum-Breen: I vividly remember the Scholastic book order form from elementary school. As the only girl in my class that played sports, I, like the most of the boys, gravitated to books about football, hockey, and basketball. But never in the choices listed was there one about girls playing sports, no one who looked like me. The Shelly Bean series is me...age six. When I was that age, some traumatic things happened that altered my course in life. A neighbor molested me for a period of time, and I was hit by a car and had to sit out of Phy. Ed. & recess for a month. There is a very personal side to Shelly Bean. She is the girl who gets to grow up in a way that I couldn’t.



(From left) Coach Shelly in the dorm; Boyum-Breen in well-coordinated sport fashion; Nell Gelhaus (on right) with a perm and perma-grin.

She gets to make a fresh clean start at life, innocent and trying new things.

Did your parents encourage you to play sports, or did you have siblings that played?

SBB: My parents were awesome. They always encouraged me to play and came to every single game I had, even away games. And oh yes: four older brothers. I grew up going to the ball park, watching them play Little League. A few of them played golf and football in high school and the brother closest to me in age was a successful three-sport athlete in high school. I thought he was so cool.

What did you play?

SBB: Basketball, football, golf, volleyball, tennis, hockey, softball, etc....you name it, I tried it.

What were your feelings about sports as a kid?

SBB: I lived and breathed sports. I pitched against the side of the garage and dented it until my dad came home, played out football and basketball scenarios in the yard and driveway. You know: "3,2,1...Oh no! She was fouled!" My friends and I even built the most awesome dirt bike track in the woods behind the house and started our own karate club after *Karate Kid* came out.

Did you ever feel like you didn't get the same opportunities as boys?

SBB: I didn't know any better until 5th grade. There were only a few of us girls who went out for basketball and we played with the boys. Then, all my guy buddies got to go out for football—pads and everything—and I wasn't allowed to do that or play hockey. I had a friend, Misty, who was the only girl in town

who played hockey. We had no idea how rare that actually was.

In the series, what obstacles does Shelly Bean have to overcome?

SBB: Shelly is six, so she thinks big, but is innocent enough that she doesn't know the basic steps. Remember being a kid and fantasizing about being "big time"? She watches an Olympic women's hockey gold medal game and imagines being there. But wait: she doesn't know how to skate yet. When my twin nephews were six and starting youth basketball, they showed up in the gym for their first practice and asked where the TV cameras were! They had seen so many Timberwolves games, Lynx games, and so on that they just put themselves there. I want readers to put themselves there.

Who is your ideal audience?

SBB: Parents and teachers and aunts and uncles who want to see their kids influenced by a strong girl. This isn't a girls' series. This is a series featuring a strong girl. I had involved parents, four brothers, and I have nine nephews and four nieces. Most of my best friends growing up were boys and they knew me for me. This series is for all kids.

LM: How many Shelly Bean books do you have planned?

SBB: I've written the outlines to 22. Eight more have serious potential right now but I have to make sure people actually like them.

Any aspirations to expand the series?

SBB: I have a lot of plans: expanded series, middle reader books with deeper plot lines, but in the end, if there isn't a following, we'll wait. I can honestly say that making Shelly Bean come to life is my greatest accomplishment and gift to myself. I could walk away right now and

be good. I have had the best time doing this and have had so many amazing conversations with people along the way about how important this would be to them. That makes my heart sing. And, I'm healed. Truly healed.

Last question: Do you think Title IX is still important?

SBB: Did you notice that Shelly Bean's jersey number is 09? Can't imagine a time that equality is ever not important, right? ■

Shelly Bean is, of course, drawn to resemble Shelly Boyum-Breen. But I look at her and I see me. And I bet that holds true for thousands of other young girls out there. I've already ordered copies for the library in the small Wisconsin town where I grew up, because I'm sure there's a girl huddled in a corner there, like I was, reading all the old Matt Christopher books I dog-eared. She probably has a haircut she'll regret and desperately wants to impress her friends in a town where succeeding in sports is the best way to do it. Maybe she'll get lucky and be sent to a camp where she'll meet a role model that she sees herself in, to give her hope and confidence. It's 2014, I'm 34 years old, and, of course, now the six years age difference doesn't seem as monumental as it did at 13, but one thing remains the same: Shelly Boyum-Breen is still who I want to be when I grow up.

How do I get my hands on Shelly Bean books? At www.shellybeanthesportsqueen.com, use Code Bean14 for purchases over \$30 to get 22% off.

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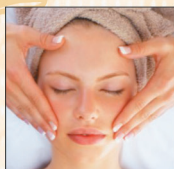
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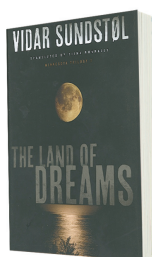
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For My Brothers

Mark Abramson
Wilde City
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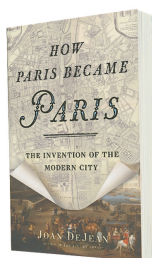
Minnesota-born, long a native of San Francisco, and author of the beguiling *Beach Reading* series, Abramson ventures into non-fiction with *For My Brothers*. Looking back from the late 1970s through the mid-1990s, he revisits the sunny, pleasure-filled years followed by the slide into the nightmare of AIDS. As a bartender on Castro, Haight, and South of Market, and as promoter of such prime fundraising events as *Men Behind Bars* and *Pier Pressure*, Abramson met dozens of the famous and infamous of the time, and pulls no punches chronicling the sex, the drugs, the heady days before the deluge. It has taken time for Abramson to be able to go back, to claim his brothers for posterity. I salute him for his courage and this moving work.



The Land of Dreams: Minnesota Trilogy 1

Vidar Sundstøl
Trans. Tiina Nunnally
University of Minnesota Press
\$24.95

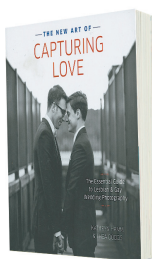
Land of Dreams is the first installment of Sundstøl's acclaimed *Minnesota Trilogy* to appear in English. U.S. Forest Service officer and passionate genealogist Lance Hansen, grandson of Norwegian immigrants, is brutally jolted from his daily routine when he discovers a body. The dead Norwegian tourist was not simply murdered, but savaged, destroyed in a way that nudges Hansen's memory. The man's companion is found covered in blood; a trail leads to a local Ojibwe man. Other paths lead back to a hundred-year-old murder in the same location. Norwegian detective Eirik Nyland is flown in to help, but at the end of this dark, mysterious, and mystic novel, Hansen is left alone with a different, closer suspect. *Only the Dead* and *The Ravens* will be forthcoming.



How Paris Became Paris: The Invention of the Modern City

Joan DeJean
Bloombury
\$30

Paris was not always the popular Paris of song and film, nor did it become today's City of Light only after Mr. Haussmann's heavy-handed ministrations in the latter nineteenth century. DeJean takes the reader back to King Henry IV and a pivotal construction: the Pont Neuf (1578-1603). With this new, wide bridge, unencumbered by structures, Parisians could for the first time really see the Seine, see their place in their city; stroll, view others, and be viewed. Henri had fortifications torn down, inviting others in rather than keeping them out. Boulevards, sidewalks, street lighting, all made the city citizen-friendly. DeJean has written extensively on Paris and the French: *The Age of Comfort*, *The Essence of Style*, and this engaging volume is a welcome addition.



The New Art of Capturing Love: The Essential Guide to Lesbian and Gay Wedding Photography

Kathryn Hamm & Thea Dodds
Amphoto Books
\$24.99

It is a photographic handbook, a social study, and a guide for same-sex couples in a bright, new era to use to capture the best possible photos of their wedding day. The illustrations are a revelation of love in some of its many forms, while opening doors to capturing traditional shots and poses for a new wave of grooms and grooms and brides and brides. Just one example, the walking shot, shows two grooms strolling under a rainbow umbrella: both an unbroken circle and a prop for those not yet comfortable holding hands in public. The book is chock-full of new takes on an old subject, leading the photographer and participants to think how they want their special emotions to be captured in time. A valuable guide. ■



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2014 Mazda3



This could be the best compact car on the market.

The fact is, the 2014 Mazda3 was designed for excellence at every turn; most of the automotive media corps walked away with that conclusion. It has been quite a wait to find out if those who loved the Mazda3 are right. There has been a lot of anticipation to find out the truth about the Mazda3.

As you know, I love Mazdas. They are one

of those car companies that truly build exciting cars for their respective classes. My reviews of the 2014 CX-5 and Mazda6 are in agreement with this summation. It is the 3's turn. My line about Mazda's newest compact was this: "It better be good."

To start with the look, the new 3 was designed with the latest look from Mazda, called "KODO - Soul of Motion." The result is an aggressive design with a huge mouth, evil eyes,

and muscular fenders. From the windshield, the car turns into something sexy. There is little distinction between the sedan and hatchback, unless you point out the nuances between the two toward the rear. Our tester happened to be the hatchback with a sleek and fluid shape leading down to the rear bumper. All doors open up to near 90 degrees and the hatch is wide and easy to load cargo in and out of.

The S Grand Touring model—the top of the

Mazda3 lineup—adds aggressive 18-inch aluminum wheels wearing Dunlop SP Sport 5000 tires. In all, the car simply looks stunning. The look is distinctive enough to point it out in a parking lot.

Mazda went with some European flair in the new 3. The first thing you notice is the Mazda Connect screen on top of the dashboard, dead center. That houses the most improved infotainment system around with a cleaner and quicker screen for navigation, audio, phone, rearview camera, and other vehicle functions. It is a touch screen; however, you can also use the knob and a series of buttons on the console for better control of the functions within Mazda Connect. The entire system is very intuitive and easy to use. Nine Bose Centerpoint speakers provide excellent sound quality throughout the cabin for satellite radio, music files via Bluetooth or USB connection, streaming music apps, and HD Radio.

The instrumentation is different, with only a tachometer in the middle of a three-part cluster. Speed is read by a digital display, using the same readouts as the side screens for trip, economy, and vehicle readouts. On this model, there is a heads-up display showing speed and cruise control status. Climate control is low on the center stack, which is also easy to use through buttons and knobs. All controls are good to the touch and intuitive, including the column stalks and steering wheel controls.

The perforated leather seats are best described as firm for drivers who want optimal control. Bolstering is right, locking many bodies into the driver's seat. Power adjustments for the driver are available for height, rake, angle,

recline, and lumbar support. Rear seat room is best for children, but four average-sized adults would be able to ride together inside of the new 3 hatchback. However, rear headroom would be a problem for taller passengers.

Cargo space is pretty decent. There is enough space—20.2 cubic feet with the rear seat up—for a weekend's worth of baggage for four people. It does expand with the rear seat down to 47.4 cubic feet.

There is a choice of engines for the new 3. You can select from a 2.0-liter Skyactiv four-cylinder with 155 horsepower for the I models. Our tester had the bigger 2.5-liter Skyactiv four-cylinder with 184 horsepower. This engine is connected to a six-speed Skyactiv Drive automatic transmission sending power to the front wheels. This combination is absolutely terrific, with quick shifts and fluid power to propel this 3,002 pound compact hatchback with ease.

There is an excellent balance between the ride and the handling. While it gets through the curves with nominal roll and lean, the 3 rewards you a smooth ride that absorbs the cracks and other hazards. You may end up hearing some of the cracks, but the cabin is quiet enough on smoother roads. Steering control is magnificent, perhaps the best in the class. Wheel response is good and has great on-center feel. Braking is superb, showing quick response on normal and panic stops. If you take one on a nice curvy road, you will find the Mazda3 S just amazing to drive.

There is more to the braking system. It gets an assist from the new i-ELOOP regenerative system. The system is used to recover energy to operate electrical components, such as the

climate control and the power steering system. Another piece of the braking system is the Smart City Braking Support. Using radar technology, the brakes will be applied if an obstruction ahead is determined by the sensors as unavoidable. This works only in very low speeds. Radar technology also drives the cruise control and forward obstruction warning system. The 3 is also equipped with blind spot monitoring, all part of the Technology Package.

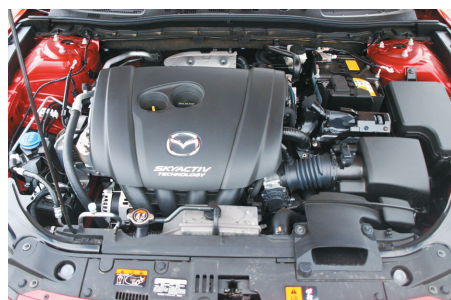
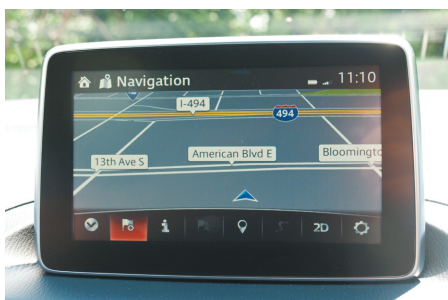
Mazda hopes that the Skyactiv system throughout the new 3 will help in raising fuel economy figures. Our tester averaged 28.9MPG. Mazda states that the Skyactiv 2.5 with the 6-speed automatic would average 32MPG.

The Mazda3 has a wide price range, starting with a 2.0-liter "I" SV 4-door sedan model and a six-speed manual for \$17,740. Our loaded 5-door S Grand Touring 5-door hatchback is on the opposite side of the spectrum with a sticker price of \$30,190. Somewhere in the middle is the right combination of features, performance, and technology that is right for you (see below).

So, how good is the Mazda3? It is pretty damn good. Shall I say "excellent," "great," "superb," as well? Seriously, Mazda did a cracking job on their compact. But, is it the best in the compact class? If you must ask, then yes.

To reiterate, the Mazda3 is a damn good compact car. It is a great getaway car, for every season of the year! It is also one of the safest cars to drive back to school in!

Need I say more? ■



OUR VOICES

SKIRTING THE ISSUES | BY ELLEN KRUG

TJ

"Precious."

That's how someone described him, grief-filled as they spoke the word. It captured the essence of a genuine human: exceedingly sweet and gentle, rare gem-like.

Thomas J. Tharp, a jewel of a person, was nineteen years old when he died on June 24 in Boulder, Colorado.

Or maybe it was June 25. No one really knows exactly when he died; all we have is that Thomas—"TJ" to his family and many friends—went to bed on the evening of the 24th after partying with booze, pot, hash oil, and Xanax. It wasn't until mid-afternoon on the 25th that he was discovered cold and blue in his off-campus bedroom.

In the end, the timing really doesn't matter. The fact that TJ's gone from this earth absolutely does.

TJ's family—the Tharps—loom large in my life. His father Dennis (whom I lovingly refer to as "Thap") has been my call-on-the-phone-every-day best friend since eighth grade football; Thap was quarterback and I was a frontline guard. When I was a dude, Thap and I were like brothers. When I transitioned to female, we became brother and sister.

Thap never withdrew, never hesitated, when I came out as transgender. "What do I care about your sex?" he said. "I'll still give you the same amount of crap."

Loving words in the only way Thap knew how. Indeed, of all the characters in my memoir, many readers report that Thap is their favorite.

As I transitioned genders, so too Thap and family transitioned. Wife Bebo, daughter Nisty, and sons Ryan, Andy and the baby of the family, TJ, went from "Uncle" to "Aunt." Uncles, aunts, and cousins dropped my man name and religiously used "Ellen." "He" became "she."

If you don't already have a sense of what this family—my adoptive family—means to me, consider this: the Tharps wear a ring of unique design. It's Southwestern in appearance with inlaid turquoise and other stones indigenous to the desert, owing to Grandpa Walter's relocation from Iowa to Arizona. The men's ring is larger, bulkier than the women's, but they all look alike.

Thap wears a Tharp family ring. TJ wore the ring. I wear the ring.

Through circumstances too complicated to fully explain in a short column, I was the one to tell Thap that his youngest child had died. I'd never wish such a task on anyone, but in retrospect, it was best that word of TJ's death came from me.

It's the kind of thing that a lifelong friend-turned-sister does.

How will I remember my precious nephew TJ Tharp?

For one, he was tenacious. When his drug problem surfaced in early

high school, he went away to get clean. First it was to a specialized school in god-there's-nothing-out-there Utah. Months afterward, TJ returned only to later relapse. Yet again he went away, this time to a wilderness school that appropriately takes its name from requiring students to live off the land for months on end. This wisp of a person hiked, camped, and sojourned his way through mountain country in Idaho and Utah. When that didn't work, TJ went to one more school in Arizona, searching for an answer to his anxieties and need to escape through cannabis.

I wrote to TJ several times while he was away, praising him for his courage and encouraging him to stay honest about his addiction. I reminded him how much he was loved and how the people in his life would be willing to do anything for him, if only he stayed sober.

TJ's tenacity took him back to Boulder where he enrolled in a community college, hoping to pursue a degree in finance. A college professor would eventually tell TJ that his intelligence and magnetic personality would someday make him another "Wolf of Wall Street."

It was quite a compliment for a human battling legions of demons.

Still, for all of his tenacity, more than anything, TJ was a lover. When he met a young woman in college and began his first-ever romance, he wrote the woman a love letter. Never sure of himself, TJ asked sister Nisty to review the letter. "What do you think?" he asked. The letter was long and beautiful, flowing in grace and wonderment, with words that any woman would cherish deep to her soul.

TJ needn't have fretted.

Several months in, TJ's love affair ended, leaving him with a broken heart. I've no doubt that fed into the cycle of self-medication from which he ultimately succumbed. Yet, TJ shouldn't have feared love lost; it would have been only a matter of time before his essence—that jewel within him—grabbed someone else, another love.

Sadly, that won't happen now.

What do we make of losing people so very young? How will my dear friend/brother Thap and his wife Bebo survive this?

I have no clue. My heart is broken, too.

When I saw TJ last, it was Christmas 2013. He entered the room and we hugged. "You are so beautiful," I said, meaning every word.

Always in doubt, and never wanting attention, TJ blushed. "Thank you, Aunt Ellen," he humbly answered.

I meant what I said.

TJ, you are so beautiful.

We will miss you forever.

Be well in eternity. ■



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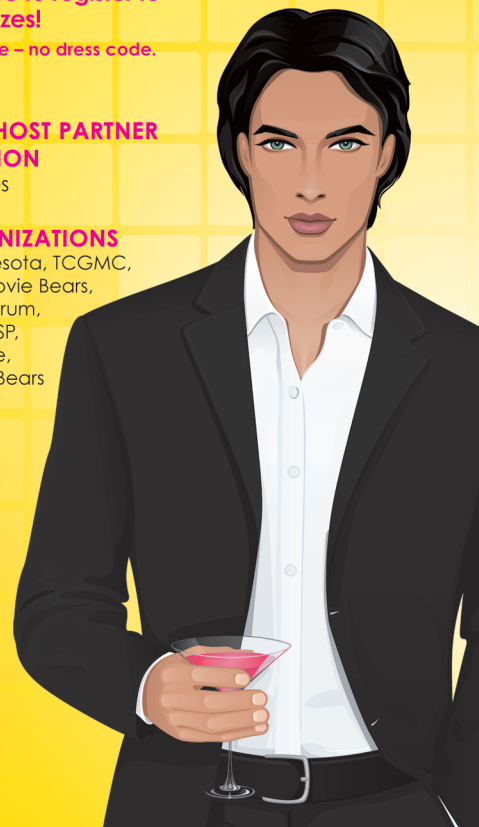


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Housing Project

Later this month, we're moving into my girlfriend's ex-partner's house. In case that sentence didn't strike you as stupid enough, let's make it even stupider. Her ex is not moving out of the house. We're sharing the house with her....and her new girlfriend, and her girlfriend's kids, and the kid that my girlfriend and her ex share.

What could possibly go wrong?

This arrangement was made without my approval or consultation. I was told one day that during the school year on weekdays we'd be living with the ex, and then would return to my home in a small resort community for the weekends.

My girlfriend was in full battle mode when she made this declaration. She fully anticipated that I'd start screaming. And, dear readers, I think you'd all agree that I'd be completely in the right to throw a tantrum.

But, I didn't. I simply shrugged my shoulders and said, "OK."

Why? Well, let's face it. I'm nearing 50 and I'm in a committed relationship, so my life isn't nearly as zany as it once was. I've taken to writing columns about my search for baby lima beans, for Christ's sakes. You deserve better! So, yeah, I'm going along with this ridiculous plan for you, dear readers. This is certain to provide a rich trough of column fodder.

The plan, at present, is to share the house until my girlfriend's son graduates high school. That's four years from now. But given the fact that we haven't even moved in yet and bickering has already started to escalate, I'm guessing we'll move out by Christmas.

So, what's the rationale behind this move? It has been explained to me by both my girlfriend and her ex, and I still don't get it. I just cock my head like a dog trying to interpret why my owner feels the need

to punish me. I haven't peed on the carpet. I haven't chewed up any of their shoes. So why am I being punished?

For the past month, my girlfriend has given nightly lectures on how I'm expected to behave once we move into the house. Most of these "discussions" (can a "discussion" be one-sided?) related to my habit of giggling each time my girlfriend's ex criticizes her. "Every time you're around her you commiserate against me!" my girlfriend said. "She wants you on her side."

This is true, dear readers. I'm a people pleaser! I love her ex, and I want her ex to love me. So when she pokes gentle fun at my girlfriend, I laugh and say something stupid like, "So true, so true." This angers my girlfriend, who then vows not to allow the ex and me in the same room ever again.

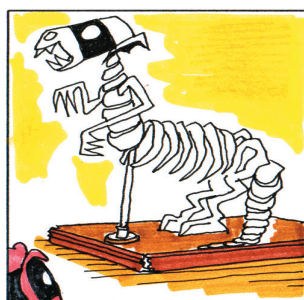
So, why then is she moving me into the same house with my comedy partner? How could this not end in some type of murder/suicide scenario?

At a recent dinner with my girlfriend, her ex, her ex's new girlfriend, me, and her ex's mom, the former partners explained the setup to the ex's mother. They said the situation demonstrated how mature we all are, and how this would be the best setup for all the children involved (I'm pretty certain they include me in the children category).

The ex's mother, a very smart and sophisticated woman, listened to this nonsense silently while coolly sipping a martini. After the girls ended the explanation with a final burst of self-congratulatory drivel, the ex's mom plucked a gin-soaked olive off a toothpick. "I lived through the '70's. I know exactly how this is going to end," she said. And then she pointedly bit the top off the head of the olive. ■

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OUR AFFAIRS

BIG GAY NEWS | BY LAVENDER | BIGGAYNEWS.COM: YOUR GLBT WORLD NEWS

BIGGAYNEWS FROM MINNESOTA: Target Signs Legal Brief Backing Gay Marriage

The *Star Tribune* reports that Target Corporation has, for the first time, come out publicly in support of gay marriage, as a growing number of high-profile businesses take positions on the divisive issue.

Jodee Kozlak, human resource chief for the company, posted "it is our belief that everyone should be treated equally under the law, and that includes rights we believe individuals should have related to marriage."

Target has been a longtime supporter of equal rights, offering benefits to same-sex partners of employees and attaining a perfect 100 score in the Human Rights Campaign's 2014 Corporate Equality Index.

BIGGAYNEWS FROM FLORIDA: Tampa Baptist Church Cancels Gay Man's Funeral

The *Tampa Bay Times* reports that Julion Evans' family was gathered beside his casket when they got the call that his memorial service, scheduled to take place the next day at New Hope Missionary Baptist Church, was not going to happen.

Evans, who had passed away from

a genetic disease at the age of 42, was gay and when members of the church saw his husband's name listed in the newspaper, they pressured Pastor T.W. Jenkins to cancel the funeral, which he did, calling a funeral for a gay man "blasphemous".

Evans' husband, Kendall Capers, said that the rejection has devastated the already grieving family, and that they appreciated being able to hold the funeral service at Blount & Curry Funeral Home instead.

BIGGAYNEWS FROM CANADA: Zanele Muholi, Queer Artist, Showcasing 'Faces and Phases'

The *Huffington Post* reports that a compelling new exhibit has hit the Ryerson Image Centre that addresses representation of queer, black female identity and its place in relation to post-apartheid South Africa.

Thirty-six black-and-white photographs out of a series of 240 taken by artist Zanele Muholi will be on display at the Ryerson Image Centre in Toronto until August 24th in an exhibit entitled "Faces and Phases".

Curators of the exhibition hope that the visual statements will serve to "dignify the members of an often hidden, voiceless and marginalized population". ■

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The Obscure Sorrows of Lane 5 (or, Low Blood Sugar)

There's a guy in line ahead of me. He's talking on his phone about Joey and the Kids, about who'll pick them up if Joey won't, and, "Oh, Bridget, would you mind picking up some tea?" Is the tea for the Kids? Or will Joey want tea when he returns from his "business" trip to New York? Joey is a busy father and emotionally absent from his marriage. The Guy Ahead of Me is his brother and becoming Dad to Joey's children in Joey's absence. Bridget is Joey's either overburdened or spoiled wife.

I do not know these people.

Wrigley's Spearmint gum or Orbit? I can never decide, so I throw both into my shopping cart.

"Well if that's the case, Joey's grounded from his Xbox."

Oh. Joey isn't a busy father. He's the Guy Ahead of Me's son, the oldest of the Kids, an awkward high school student consumed by video games, who loathes Facebook and dabbles on Instagram. He does okay in school, better at art and music than science and math.

There's the soda cooler. Should I grab a soda?

"Really? Really? Look at this line! Are you freakin' serious?" says a man behind me. I glance back. Early 20s, brunette, unshaven, handsome in a hungover-frat-boy way. He's wearing greasy pajama bottoms and smells like socks. I want to tell him that he can skip me; he only has a few things—*why doesn't he*

go to the self-checkout?—but if I let him ahead of me, I'll feel obligated to do the same for new members of Lane 5. An older Asian lady just pulled up the rear. She's looking at her cell phone but not texting.

Mountain Dew? I haven't had one in a long time. Oh, there's PEOPLE Magazine. Remember LIFE Magazine? Is that still a thing?

"Oh, okay," says the Guy Ahead of Me into his phone. "Tell him not to waste our time, then. I'm not buying it."

Buying what? Why isn't *he* buying his tea while he's here at Rainbow? Are the Kids on a diet during which they can only drink special tea not sold at a supermarket? Eh. The Guy Ahead of Me is buying full-fat ranch dressing and Diet Coke, among other things special tea-drinkers don't buy.

The line moves. The Guy Ahead of Me starts checking out. He ignores the cashier's "How are you today?"

Or Dr. Pepper? I don't usually drink soda, but I'm set on getting something other than this gum as a treat for a successful shopping trip. I'm about to spend \$100 on a cart almost completely filled with frozen food.

"Dude, eff this. I'm out," the Guy Behind Me says but then doesn't leave the line. I'm tense around him. Why is he so angry? Is his girlfriend threatening to break up with him *again*? She's pretty and bubbly and accidentally manipulative. I can relate.

A big Hispanic family enters the line behind the Woman Who's Not Texting.

Ahead of Me: "Yes, yes! Bridget, yes." Pause. "No." Pause. "Yes, but—" Pause. "Okay, well then you tell Joey to stop it. And the tea?" The Guy Ahead of Me slides his credit card and leaves the line. I hope Joey gets to keep his Xbox.

"How are you today?" the cashier asks me without making eye contact. She's blonde and in her late thirties. Her name tag says "Cindy." She looks tired and tans too much.

Fanta? And why am I giving Lane 5 such bad stories?

"I'm great. How are you?"

"Good, thanks. Paper or plastic?"

"Paper, please."

I need Cindy to take her time scanning my items. I need to sort out Lane 5's story before I go.

I look back.

The Guy Behind Me is looking at the soda cooler. The Woman Who's Not Texting is plundering through the candy. One of the kids from the Hispanic family is thumbing through lighters and Chapstick.

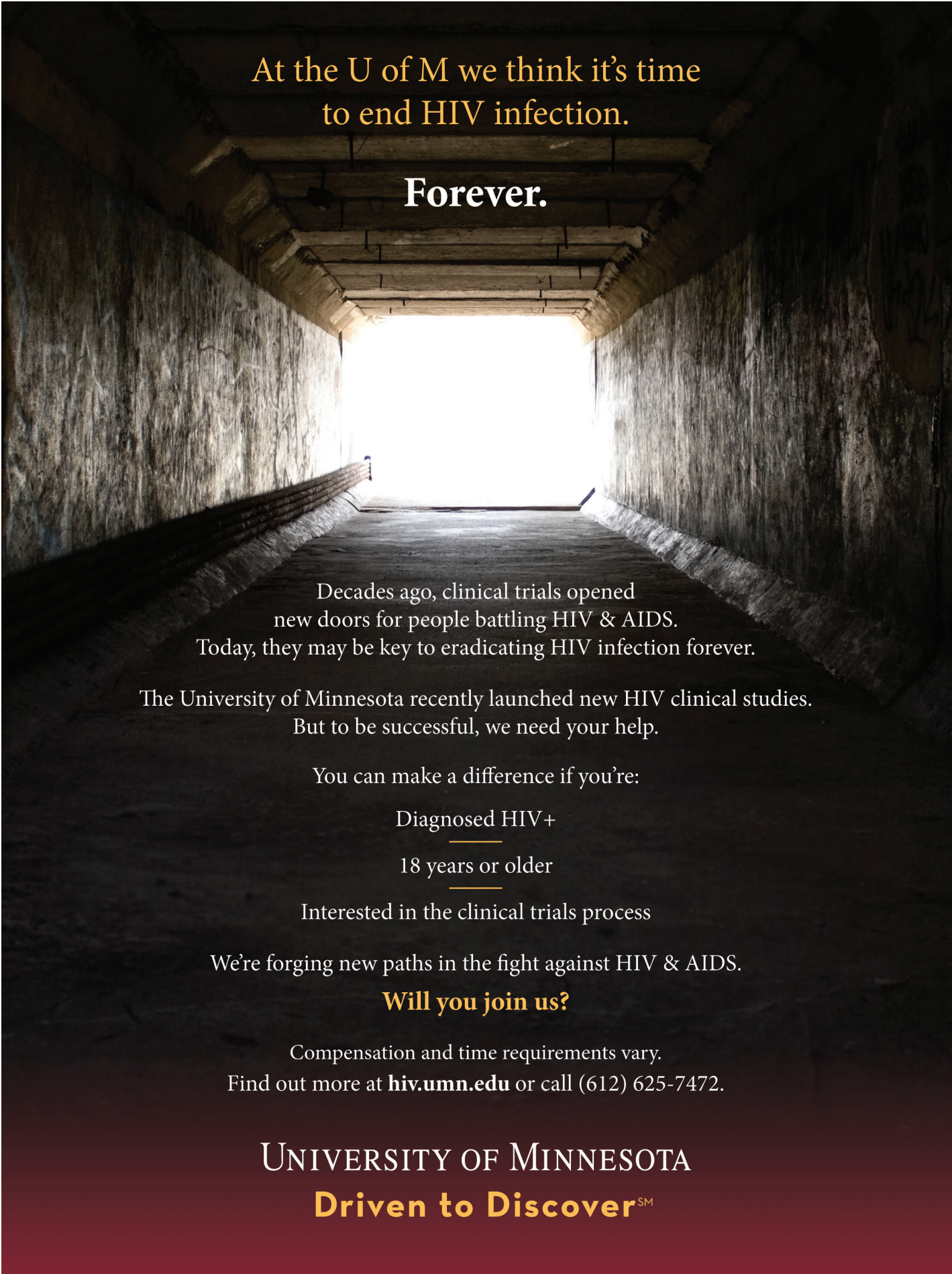
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Cindy smiles.

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